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THE

# LADDER OF LIFE.

BY

THOMAS SHEEHAN.



BOSTON :  
PRESS OF ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL, 39 ARCH STREET,  
1878.

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## Dramatis Personæ and Costumes.

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**CHARLES CLIFFORD.** — *Act First:* Dark-colored threadbare and slightly dilapidated but tastefully adjusted costume. *Act Second:* New and fashionable; not ostentatious. *Act Third:* Same. *Act Fourth:* Same, much worn. *Act Fifth, Scene Third:* Prison dress, which is exchanged for Mike's. *Scene Fourth:* 1st dress, Mike's; 2d dress. Dressing-gown and whiskers *à la française*. *Scene Fifth:* Mike's, minus gown and whiskers.

**PROFESSOR.** — Words delivered with a slight Yankee accent. Blue swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons; fancy figured vest; pants to suit; light-colored, very long nap, bell-top silk hat; massive watch-chain; long gray hair; small gray whiskers on chin, etc.

**ROBERT ARNOLD.** — Fashionable cut, color to suit complexion; but preferably a dark-complexioned, regular-featured, graceful-moving man of the Italian or Spanish type, apparelled in dark colors, varied as the play advances.

**FRED REVERE.** — *Act First:* Very dilapidated light-colored and carelessly (not slovenly) adjusted costume. *Act Fourth:* New light-colored, fashionable, *à la* ready-made costume. *Act Fifth:* Same.

**BOSWICK.** — Very fancy colors, extremely fashionable cut. Hair and whiskers so arranged as to give the face a slight resemblance to a poodle; light complexion.

**MIKE.** — Corduroy knee-breeches; blue stockings; short-skirt English walking coat. Exchanges with Charles in prison.

**POLICE.** — Nos. 1 and 2. Uniform.

**MINISTER.** — Nos. 1 and 2. Black.

**JAILER.** — Ordinary or prison officer's uniform.

**ATTORNEY.** — Plain business.

**CLARA.** — Plain, subdued colors, *à la* American educated lady in good circumstances, varied as the play advances.

**JENNY.** — *Act Third:* Calico. *Act Fourth:* Same, much worn. *Act Fifth, Scene Third:* Male costume, boy. *Scene Fourth:* Female attire. *Scene Fifth:* Same.

**MISS AMARIAH.** — Plain, subdued colors, varied as the piece advances.

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# THE LADDER OF LIFE.

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## A C T I.

SCENE 1.—*Parlor, with door in f.; sofa r.; table l. c., with bouquet; bookcase r. back; parlor stove l.* CLARA discovered seated at table.

CLARA. To-day, my twentieth birthday, uncle has promised to disclose my parentage: why he should have kept it a secret is a problem I could never solve. Perhaps it was to give me a pleasant surprise. I mustn't be surprised at anything uncle says or does, he is such an original oddity.

*Enter Miss Am., r.*

But I may be uncle's daughter!

MISS AM. Impossible, my dear! How can you be the daughter of your uncle? Besides, the Professor has never had a wife, and consequently could have no daughter.

CLARA. But, aunt, I must be somebody's daughter.

MISS AM. Now you are among the possibilities. It is plainly evident that every young lady must be a daughter to somebody.

*Enter PROF. and ARN., f. from l.*

CLARA. Yes; but whose daughter am I?

PROF. Your father's, my dear.

CLARA. O uncle! (*Goes to PROF.*) And he was—

PROF. The husband of your mother. [*Kisses CLARA.*]

CLARA. Thank you, uncle, for your information. But remember you promised me that on my twentieth birthday you would give me all the information you possessed regarding my parents. Uncle, this day is my twentieth birthday.

PROF. No, my dear, this is not your birthday.

CLARA. Not my birthday!

PROF. No. When you first came into my possession, twenty years ago, you were then some months old, which, therefore, adds a plus to your age; and I fear that plus will always remain an unknown quantity. But let me introduce the son of an old friend and schoolmate,—Mr. Robert Arnold. Mr. Arnold, my ward, Miss Clara Harold; and my very esteemed friend, Miss Amariah.

MISS AM. You are welcome, sir.

CLARA. Any friend of uncle's is always welcome.

ARN. Thanks, ladies. I hope I shall always merit a welcome.

PROF. Spoken like his father. Ah! many the lampful of oil we burned together in trying to discover the missing link in Darwin's theology; but we failed. Then he became disgusted, and repudiated Darwin altogether; but I still maintain my old opinions. The missing link will yet be found, the chain become complete. Then what a glorious victory for science! Science, the only lamp which lights the world, through how many ages have you—

CLARA. Yes, uncle, through how many ages have I been without knowing anything about myself?

PROF. My dear child, let your curiosity rest a while.

CLARA. A woman's curiosity, uncle, once aroused, can never rest till satisfied.

PROF. My dear, you must know that, when science is under consideration, it is primary, and feminine curiosity is but secondary; and a secondary should never usurp the place of a primary.

CLARA. I am not familiar with your science, uncle; but experience and observation have taught me that happiness is the primary consideration, and all others are secondary; and, uncle, a secondary should never usurp the place of a primary.

PROF. Scientifically correct; but what applicability does that bear to feminine curiosity?

CLARA. Curiosity, uncle, is one form of suspense, and suspense is an attribute of unhappiness; and whatever tends to remove unhappiness always adds to happiness; and, consequently, uncle, by satisfying my curiosity you will be relieving my suspense, thereby promoting my happiness.

PROF. Then, my dear, you shall be happy.

ARN. As this does not concern me, probably I had better retire.

MISS AM. Not at all, sir; Clara's origin is such that she may be proud of.

CLARA. It may be a very entertaining romance, sir. Now, uncle—

PROF. Well, in the first place, my dear, you must know that I am—

CLARA. Yes, you are—

PROF. Not your uncle.

CLARA. Then, you are my—

PROF. Guardian only by right of discovery. Twenty years ago, at the expiration of my scientific researches in Europe, I engaged passage on board the ship "Argus," from England to America. Among the passengers was a gentleman, his wife, and two small children, brother and sister. The gentleman was a retired army officer, Captain Harold. He was accompanied by an Irish servant called Corporal McNoon. One day there arose a most violent storm; we were all on deck witnessing the phenomenon, and I had both children in my arms playing with them, when a huge, mountainous portion of the agitated ocean, with an indescribable sub-

limity, came furiously rushing upon us, and angrily swept over us, carrying with it the gentleman, his wife, and Irish corporal, leaving me with two babies entangled in the ship's ladders, nautically nomenclatured ratlines, from which with difficulty I became extricated. Upon landing I gave the boy to a person called Revere. I placed on him a small gold medal, with the word "Argus" scratched on it. The girl I kept myself; you are that girl, Clara.

CLARA. What became of my brother, uncle?

PROF. Some years after I called for him, but Revere had disappeared; upon inquiry I was informed that the boy had died soon after I had gone.

CLARA. Oh, how I wish my brother had lived; how I would have loved him! Do you remember, uncle, how he looked?

PROF. All babies look alike to me; I could not distinguish a boy from a girl. But I have another very important secret for you, Clara.

CLARA. Yes, uncle.

PROF. Every year for twenty years I have placed to your account five hundred dollars; the total sum, plus the five hundred I add to-day, amounts to ten thousand dollars.

CLARA. O uncle! uncle!

[Places arm about PROF.'s neck and kiss.

PROF. Now, my dear, that sum I place in your hands on the day of your marriage.

CLARA. I shall never leave you, uncle.

PROF. Very well, my dear, we shall talk of that another time. (*Looks at watch.*) But I must be going, business must not be neglected; I must advertise my nostrum extensively to-day. (*Takes hat and valise.*) If you are going anywhere this evening, I shall be in the square, and you may send word, if you wish my escort. Mr. Arnold, I leave you to amuse yourself as you may.

MISS AM. Professor, we are going to the theatre this evening.

PROF. Very well, I shall be back in time to accompany you.

[Exit f. off L.

MISS AM. Clara, we shall retire and complete our arrangements for the evening's entertainment. Mr. Arnold, please excuse our absence.

[Exit r.

ARN. Ten thousand dollars, and a most charming girl! That is something worth striving for, and I will strive for it. My wife she must be.

## SCENE 2.—Street.

Enter FRED and CHAS., R., walking slowly, FRED in advance with small bundle in red handkerchief, suspended from stick over shoulder. CHAS. with small valise suspended from stick over shoulder. Wardrobe very threadbare. CHAS. stops at c.

CHAS. Fred, I'm not going any farther; this monotonous, disagreeable kind of a life I'll not lead any longer.

FRED. Come, come, Charles, cheer up, don't be discouraged.

CHAS. Fred, this day must decide our future welfare, and—and to do so we must part.

FRED. What! We part! Dissolve a friendship which has lasted so long! Absurd; I won't believe it. Misfortune has affected your brain, and, of course, not responsible for what you say.

CHAS. My dear boy, I do not wish to dissolve our friendship; I only want to advance our mutual welfare.

FRED. Mutual nonsense! Mutual starvation, more like. Why, it takes our strongest mutual combined efforts to keep our body and soul together; so how is our separation going to advance our welfare?

CHAS. We prevent each other from starving, I know; but we also prevent each other from raising above our present position.

FRED. Now, that is what I call false philosophy, Charles. How do you prove it?

CHAS. We rely too much on each other, Fred. The most successful men in life have become so through their own individual exertions, and a large part of them date their success from extreme adversity, which proves that it required something very extraordinary to stimulate that energy which lay dormant, and which was necessary for success. Now, Fred, there may be energy enough in either of us to change our condition, if we only exert ourselves.

FRED. To change our condition requires no energy. Charles, I will show you life as it really is; I will illustrate it by a ladder, and call it the Ladder of Life. Now, to us, or to any who are situated as we now are, that ladder is very long and narrow, with a large number of broken places. Now, all the world is on that ladder, and they are all trying to reach a place called Happiness, situated at different heights to different persons; but there are so many broken places, and they are so very difficult to pass, that a large part of the climbers give up in despair and fall off, for without assistance no one can pass a broken place. Charles, we are now on the lowest step of that ladder; together we hold each other on that step; to part, is to loose our hold and drop off; and once off that ladder you can never get on again; but while you stay on there is hope of going higher.

CHAS. A very excellent illustration, indeed, Fred; but that ladder is so narrow that we cannot climb together; we must climb it singly and alone; then, he who becomes successful, can afterwards very easily assist the other over the broken places; but to remain together on the same step, is to be always hoping, and he who hopes and never does, will on no ladder ever rise.

FRED. Charles, remember "there is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

CHAS. Fred, the same author says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, if taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." Now, the tide in our affairs may have arrived at its flood this very day.

FRED. At its ebb, more likely. Charles, twenty years ago, when you were left at our house, my mother nursed you as tenderly as if you were her own baby, receiving nothing for her pains but

an old medal with the word "Argus" on it. Now, Charles, you need nursing still, and I fear I shall have to do for you now what my mother done for you twenty years ago; but I shall ask more than an old medal for my pains.

CHAS. Oh, Fred, you don't know how this pains me! But this life we must change,—yes, we must part. Fred, here are two roads: you choose one and I'll choose the other. Which will you choose?

FRED. Which? I've got no choice. Yes; I'll choose them both.

CHAS. Then we shall let luck decide it. (*Picks up stick.*) Here, which end of this stick do you choose?

FRED. Both ends.

CHAS. Then I'll choose. This is my end, that is yours. Whatever direction this end points, I'll go; that end, you go. (*Toss up stick.*) This is my road (*points L.*); that yours (*points R.*) *Picks up stick and breaks it.*) Here, take this: I'll keep this to remember a dear and noble friend by. [*Gives piece stick to FRED.*

FRED. Are we ever going to meet again?

CHAS. Yes, one year from to-day let us meet on that square (*points L.*); and whoever is successful will divide with the other. Good-by, Fred, good-by, and may Heaven preserve you till we meet again.

FRED. Charles, beware of the broken places on the Ladder of Life. Remember, without assistance, no one can pass them.

CHAS. Yes, Fred, I'll remember. Good-by, good-by, Fred.

[*Exit L.*

FRED. Good-by, Charles. Well, now what am I to do? Yes, I'll climb that Ladder of Life, too. Here goes for it. [*Exit R.*

*Enter PROF., R., carrying small hand-trunk or valise, stops at c., lays down baggage, appears as if to address, but looks at watch, hurriedly replaces it, snatches up baggage, and Exit L.*

SCENE 3.—*Street sq., with street-lamp R. back; PEDESTRIANS, NEWSBOYS, BOOTBLACKS, fruit-stands, etc., etc.; snow falling slightly; lights lowered half down.* Enter LAMP-LIGHTER, L., with ladder, and lights lamp, and *Exit R.* Enter CHAS., R. U. E.

CHAS. Employment I cannot get; all my applications are met with either distrust or disdain. When a man is down, this whole world seems to combine to keep him down. I have not the courage to beg, and I don't want to steal. Oh, what can I do? Ah! yes, I see a way (*with bottle*). This has cured me of a very severe rheumatism when everything else had failed. Now, I can sell this, and, with the proceeds, buy some more, and sell again, and again, and again. Thank Heaven, I can now pass the first broken step on the Ladder of Life. Now to climb it. Ladies and gentlemen, if you will deign to give me your attention a few moments, I shall endeavor, to the best of my ability, to describe an article to which I invite your close inspection.

*Enter PROF. R., 1st entrance.*

My friends (BOOTBLACK and NEWSBOY stand in front of CHAS.), the article to which I invite your inspection is this (*holds up bottle*).

PROF. Hello, what is this dilapidated specimen of humanity trying to perform?

CHAS. It is used as an external application in all rheumatic affections, and, in the majority of cases, it allays the most violent pains. It would be absurd in me, my friends, to say that my medicine would cure all cases, for no medicine will do that; and the article that is recommended to cure all ills will, as a rule, without any exception, cure no ill. In cases where my medicine should fail, it is perfectly harmless. I would not recommend it to be taken internally, as it is too strong to be agreeable; and, in all serious cases, no medicine should be used only by the approval of an experienced physician.

PROF. Wal, I should say this creature was a sort of an educated fool; it is very evident he never was intended for the business he is now engaged in.

[PROF. at back R.]

CHAS. My friends, as I have fully tested it myself upon my own person, I can, therefore, conscientiously recommend it equal to —

PROF. Blood, blood, blood! War, war, war! Ladies and gentlemen, he who advances the assertion, that he is the most perfect of his kind, unjustly accuses himself of that which he is not, and will, eventually, become an inmate of our institutions for imbecillie and aged children. (*People all crowd in front of PROF.*) Ladies and gentlemen, it is not necessary to announce who I am individually, as my fame always precedes me; but, as there may be some here who are not familiar with the learned institutions of our country, for their edification and gratification I humbly announce myself as Professor Wyseall, the greatest living nomenclaturist and Professor of Polylogy and originator and promulgator of an unrivalled systematic polyological classification of all biologized animation. I have reduced all nature to a comprehensible polytechnical nomenclature, — an undertaking never before accomplished by any mammalian vibrated biped. For years I have soliloquized in the vast expansive unexplorations of the mioceneal geologic portions of this our unsurpassable freedomated portion of the terraqueous sphere, communing with no one but the indigenous aboriginal bimanic bipedal mammals. And what is the result of all these years of toil, privation, and study? It is this (*holds up bottle*). This, which I now place before what should be your astonished gaze, is a solidified alkaline silicate. Enclosed within this silicate is a composition which can emanate from none but an extremely learned brain; — it is the *ne plus ultra* of a series of complicated, laborious studies; it is an aqueous solution of the solidified concentrated extract of nine distinct genera of my polylogical arrangement of the botanical kingdom, embracing every species in each genera, and is recommended by me and all the learned faculties in the world for all ills that flesh is heir to; it is a principal ingredient in the prescription of every M.D. in the civilized world. But if there is an M.D. who

does not recommend my production, you will find him, on a scrutinizing inspection, to bear a close resemblance to the dilapidated party who preceded me in trying to force upon your good nature a most worthless nostrum. Beware of all such parties. His address, language, and whole appearance, would justify you in comparing him to some M.D. who had poisoned half the community in which he formerly resided, and now flies to you for assistance.

CHAS. My friends, don't you believe this man.

PROF. He says his article is too strong to be administered internally. Conclusive evidence of its being a most virulent poison. He says, in cases where it fails, it is harmless; sufficient proof of its being worthless. His whole address conveys the idea, that to take his medicine you must also take a physician.

CHAS. Ladies and gentlemen —

CROWD. Ha, ha, ha! Go poison yourself.

PROF. My friends, I believe I have proved the superiority of my production, so as no rational being will doubt its efficacy; and all who desire it can procure it at any pharmaceutical establishment; or, it will be furnished you, accompanied by a nosological diagnosis, on application at my laboratory. [Crowd go off.

CHAS. Oh! how hard it is to climb this Ladder of Life.

PROF. Young man, remember I sweep all competition from my path (*CHARLES turns away*); but I would advise you to choose another occupation. If you remain in this, it is sure bankruptcy, for you are not adapted to it. This world is full of men who are discouragingly and unsuccessfully toiling at what nature never intended them. But if you do remain in this business, remember there are two kinds of honesty in this world: conscientious and legal honesty. This advice I give you gratis; I purchased it at a dear experience. Good-day! [Exit R.

CHAS. Oh! what can I do? Must I starve? No, no. I'll — yes, I'll beg; it is my last and only chance.

Enter ARN., R.

ARN. Professor ain't here. I must have missed him on the way.

CHAS. Sir, please give me a supper; I will repay you when I can.

ARN. Eh? Give you a supper? My dear sir, I would be very happy to accede to your request if I could do so without outraging reason and nature; but there are three very excellent reasons, sir, which prevent my satisfying your demand. The first reason is, that, by giving you a supper, I should be cheating the earth out of so much very valuable fertilizing matter; now, that would be wronging the community. The second reason is, it would be continuing your existence, thereby prolonging your misery; now, that would be wronging you. The third reason is, I should be giving without receiving any equivalent; now, that would be wronging myself. I presume, sir, you are aware that you must leave this world some time; you gain nothing by staying in it, by leaving it now, you may save several hours of anxiety. Good-day! [Exit R.

(*Snow falling fast. CHAS. kneels. Music, "Sweet Spirit, Hear My Prayer." Voices in distance singing same. Voices slowly die away.*)

*Enter POLICE, l., walking slowly.*

POLICE. Hello! what is this? Come, come, get off the sidewalk. (*Places foot against CHAS., and throws him, and rolls him with his foot down stage.*) If you want to lay anywhere, lay in the gutter, and not be a stumbling-block for people to fall over. There! Strange, society must be burdened with such creatures. (*Exit r.*)

*Enter chorus of male and female voices, singing "We won't go home till morning." Cross stage and Exit r. Singing dies away. Enter PROF. and CLARA, r., with raised umbrella.*

CLARA. What nice sleighing this will make, uncle. (*CHAS. groans.*) Ha! what's that?

PROF. That? Why, it is the poor creature who had the audacity to compete with me. It is only an unsuccessful man. (*Gives umbrella to CLARA, goes to CHAS., and places foot upon him.*) Clara, here you see a picture of the Ladder of Life,—the unsuccessful and the successful man.

[*CLARA throws down umbrella and runs to CHAS.*

CLARA. No, no, uncle, your picture is not complete; a woman belongs on that ladder (*raises CHAS.' head in her arms, kneeling at his side*), and here is her place.

*Enter MISS AM., and ARN., r.*

MISS AM. Professor, what is this?

PROF. This is the Ladder of Life.

[*Tableau.*

*Curtain.*

### A C T I I.

PARLOR.—*Same as SCENE 1, ACT I. CLARA discovered seated, r. MISS AM., l.*

MISS AM. Clara, I have been interviewed on several occasions regarding the disposal of your hand. I have dismissed all parties entertaining such ideas without much ceremony, informing them I had no idea of your becoming a secondary consideration to any man; but as the Professor has prevailed upon me to request you to choose a husband, I simply communicate his request, but permit you to use your own discretion.

*Enter PROF., f. from l.*

PROF. Good-day, Amy.

MISS AM. Good-day, Professor; I have just communicated your demand to Clara.

PROF. And how does my dear receive it?

CLARA. With surprise, uncle. All the morning I have been most pleasantly surprised in receiving those very pretty presents, and reading the billet doux which accompany them. Now, here is a gentleman who is a perfect Shylock.

MISS AM. They are all Shylocks, my dear. What does he demand, a pound of your flesh?

CLARA. Much more; he demands my whole heart.

PROF. Then he is a greater than Shylock.

CLARA. Here is his note, uncle; you may read it.

PROF. (Reading.)

"If that sweet heart I did possess,  
No earthly cares would me oppress;  
In this lone bosom I'd lock it fast,  
And treasure it there while life shall last."

Hem! very poetical, indeed; but I never knew a poet yet that wasn't a lunatic.

CLARA. Here is another Shylock, but he is more modest than the other; he only wants my hand. I suppose the next will want my feet. If I should try to please them all, uncle, I'd be in a very awkward condition.

PROF. By trying to please all, you will please none; but by pleasing yourself, you will please the majority.

CLARA. Then I shall try and please the majority, uncle. But why do you wish me to choose a husband?

PROF. No young lady should arrive at your age without good prospects of a husband. Several most excellent gentlemen—

MISS AM. According to the general interpretation of the word "gentlemen."

PROF. Have requested permission to place their hearts at your disposal.

CLARA. Oh, won't that be nice! I'll have them all arranged alphabetically, and label them *à la* Museum. But will those foolish gentlemen survive a separation from their hearts?

PROF. The gentlemen, I believe, accompany their hearts. Your aunt being an avowed man-hater, I fear you are becoming impregnated with her ideas, which may result in the most foolish nonsense, that of becoming an old maid.

MISS AM. An old maid, sir, is not subject to the sulky, spiteful freaks of a jealous husband,—her mind is not in a continual worry, fearing she may not please her lord and master. An old maid, sir, leads a happy life.

PROF. The extreme anxiety which every widow displays in trying to form another attachment does not bear you out in your assertions. Any person in the full possession and exercise of all their faculties who persists in leading a single life transgresses a fundamental law of our being,—consequently, an old maid is a crime against nature. By the by, Clara, what has become of your *protégé*?

CLARA. He calls to pay his respects to me very often, uncle.

MISS AM. Clara, beware how you entertain any affection for a person whose previous life is a blank. Many a young lady has been wrecked beyond redemption by placing confidence in parties before ascertaining their real characters.

CLARA. His character shines in his eyes, aunt; and uncle says the soul is reflected in the eyes.

MISS AM. Man is so great a dissembler, my dear, that he hides all reflection of his real character, and has at command a second character, which he reflects at will. Professor, if you will accompany me to the garden, you may examine some of my recent horticultural exploits. (*PROF. takes Miss AM.'s arm.*) Clara, if any of the visitors who may call should prove disagreeable, you can refer them to the garden; we will entertain them.

[*Exit with PROF., f. off R.* CLARA seated on sofa, R.]

CLARA. I have heard that when men wish to disclose their affections, they become very ridiculous. Now, I suppose I must witness their absurdities.

*'Enter Boswick, f. from L.'*

BOS. Ah! Miss Clawah.

CLARA. Ah! Mr. Boswick.

BOS. Ah! Clawah, I've come to — to —

CLARA. Enjoy yourself.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha, clevah!

CLARA. Be seated, please.

BOS. Yah! but — ah! shall I sit upon the sofah, or —

CLARA. Every seat in the room is at your disposal.

BOS. Ah! then I will sit heah. [*Sits on sofa.*]

CLARA. Ah! you find this the most attractive.

BOS. Attwactive? Clawah! Ah! the magnet that attwacts the loadstone is not so attwactive as — ah! — the ah! —

CLARA. As the one which repels it.

BOS. Ah! Clevah, clevah, I declah! I should nevah — nevah —

CLARA. Have answered so very foolishly.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clawah, I declah you are —

CLARA. Only a foolish girl, Mr. Boswick.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Why, Clawah, how vewy interesting our conversation is.

CLARA. Because we are both engaged in it, and we are always interested in our own conversation.

BOS. By Jove, so we are — we — we learn something ewy hour — but — ah! Clawah, I forgot — I — I weally forgot —

CLARA. What you were going to say.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah! I declah — but — oh! I wemember, I'm studying stwonomy with the Pwfessoh.

CLARA. Ah! then you like astronomy?

BOS. We — well, Clawah, I — I can hardly say I do.

CLARA. And why not?

Bos. Be — because I weally can't see how one star can find out when another star wants to mawy him.

CLARA. Ha, ha, ha! Why, stars don't marry.

Bos. I — I beg pardon, Clawah; but the Pwofessoh says, eweiything must be male or female; and, last night, as I was stwonominizing the sky, I saw one star wun wight into nuther star, and stay there. Now, they must have got mawied; and — and — Clawah, how did that star know that the other star wanted to get mawied to him?

CLARA. Well, I suppose the first star desired to marry the other, and I presume he went and popped the question.

Bos. Yah, ha, ha! Clawah, I — I — I'm a star, and your star, and, Clawah, I — I pop.

CLARA. Pop what?

BOS. The — the question.

CLARA. What question?

BOS. The — the question that the star popped at the other star.

CLARA. But there are no stars here to pop at.

BOS. No, no, Clawah; I — I'm poppin' at you.

CLARA. And why do you pop at me?

Bos. Be — because I — I weally, Clawah — I declah — the — the — I — I weally — I — wha — what was I saying?

CLARA. Well, really, Mr. Boswick, I haven't the least idea.

Bos. Oh! I wemember. If you was a star, Clawah, and wanted to get mawied, and I was a star, and — and —

CLARA. The stars don't always marry, they sometimes refuse.

Bos. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah! — but — ah! — astwonomically, Clawah, if you were a star would you mawy the other star?

CLARA. Not being a star, Mr. Boswick, I am not competent to answer. But (*goes to R.*) uncle and aunt are in the garden, and I believe they would be very happy to see you.

Bos. Yah, ha, ha!

CLARA. And uncle may give you further instructions in astronomy.

Bos. Ah! I hasten to weceive it.

[*Exit F. off R.* CLARA comes down stage.]

CLARA. I wonder if there will be any more question-popping?

*Enter ARN., F. from L.*

ARN. Bon jour, Mademoiselle Clara.

CLARA. Bon jour, Monsieur Arnold. I was not aware that you were familiar with a language not spoken here.

ARN. Oh, yes; in my recent tour in Europe, I was compelled to acquire several languages; but I very seldom use any, except French. An occasional word, through our ordinary English, removes the vulgarity which all English sometimes creates.

CLARA. Then if you were to write a book for English readers, you would introduce all the French you could think of, I presume?

ARN. No, that would be exposing a lack of common-sense; but in conversation, it creates an atmosphere of refinement.

CLARA. Then, if you were in France, you would place yourself in a French atmosphere of refinement by substituting English for some of their French, I presume?

ARN. No, I should use pure French.

CLARA. Why not remain in France?

ARN. Because my heart is here, and so fast to an object, that I cannot remove the heart without the object; and the laws of the country forbid the removal of the object without its consent.

CLARA. Then why not obtain its consent?

ARN. If you were the object, Clara, would you give your consent?

CLARA. Well, I should not keep any gentleman's heart from him.

ARN. Would you accompany the heart if the gentleman desired it?

CLARA. That would depend altogether on the gentleman, and who he was.

ARN. Clara, I am that gentleman, and you are the object; and, Clara, without you

*Enter CHAS., f. from L.*

is without life.

CLARA. Oh Charles! (*Runs to CHARLES.*) I am so glad you are come! Mr. Arnold, please excuse me. Come, Charles, the garden is much pleasanter, and I have lots to tell you.

[*Exit both, f. off R.*

ARN. Ah, I see! It is plainly evident that I possess no share of Clara's affections. This Clifford has usurped them. Now, he is perfectly aware that I possess a prior claim, and yet he completely ignores that claim, thereby advancing his own individual interests at my expense. Now, I have the same right to advance my interests at his expense as he has at mine. But how? I might induce him to relate to me all the incidents of his past adventurous life, and from that I may hear something to my advantage.

*Enter CHAS., f. from R.*

Ah! Mr. Clifford, are you disengaged?

CHAS. No, sir, not quite. I came in to get Clara's shawl; but if I can oblige you in any manner, Mr. Arnold, I should be very happy to do so.

ARN. I have been thinking, recently, about investing my superfluous moments in writing a novel, and I thought—as a portion of your life has been very adventurous—I thought, probably, the relation of it might assist me in composing a plot.

CHAS. With pleasure, sir; I will relate it. I believe I have time to do so now. Clara is so very interested in Boswick's nonsense, that she won't miss me for a few moments. At what period of my existence shall I commence?

ARN. The earliest you can remember.

CHAS. Well, the earliest I can remember is in the family of my adopted father, Mr. Charles Clifford, Sr. He says I was left there by a friend named Revere. Well, after a few years Mrs. Clifford died; then Mr. Clifford and myself went roaming through Europe; but he, becoming fascinated with Parisian society, with not enough dis-

cretion to avoid the breakers, became hopelessly ruined; desperation ensued, and the river which flows through Paris receives a victim, which places me in the world without friend, trade, or profession.

ARN. Have you any idea what your real name is?

CHAS. When I was a child, I had always worn upon my person a small medal with the word "Argus" faintly scratched on it.

ARN. Where is that medal now?

CHAS. The Clifffords had a little daughter called Jenny, my constant companion and playmate; around her neck I placed the medal, and bade her good-by; that was the last I have ever seen or heard of her. But Clara will be impatient. I'll tell you the rest at another time. [Exit F. to R.

ARN. Why, this Clifford is the very child the professor saved! He is Clara's brother, with an excellent prospect of becoming her husband! Now, where does my advantage lie? If I expose the relationship, will she marry me? Probably not; but if she should, — then I'd be losing: this Clifford would undoubtably receive half the property. But if she marries her brother, I can dissolve the union afterwards, substitute myself, and dispose of him; thereby gaining both wife and full property. But to marry a woman who has been in the possession of another man —

CLARA (*outside*). Ha, ha, ha!

*Enter CLARA and CHARLES, F. from R.*

and you really think I am an angel, Charles?

CHAS. To me, Clara, you are all that any angel could be. (ARNOLD goes to F.) When to the lowest extremity of life reduced, on the verge of destruction placed, you, as my guardian angel, reached forth your hand, and, from the lowest rung of this Ladder of Life, lifted me up to where I now stand. Would any angel do more?

CLARA. If you continue your flattery, Charles, I may think I am an angel; then I shall be very vain, and, consequently, coquettish; then consider how you shall suffer.

CHAS. I shall do my utmost to serve you, and pay no attention to the coquetry.

CLARA. Now, I'll test your willingness to serve me, Charles.

CHAS. Test me.

CLARA. First, you must promise to do what I shall now ask of you.

CHAS. I promise.

CLARA. Faithfully?

CHAS. And solemnly.

CLARA. Now, uncle has requested me to choose a husband today; but I cannot do so myself, I — Charles, I'd have you, from among my friends, choose the man that I must call husband.

CHAS. Ah! husband! Oh, no, no; I cannot do this.

CLARA. Oh, very well, if your word is of so little consequence —

CHAS. No, no, Clara, I value my word, but there are exceptions.

CLARA. Not to a gentleman of honor.

CHAS. Clara, will you promise not to reject my choice? Now, 'tis only fair you should, — promise for promise.

CLARA. Well, I promise.

CHAS. Then I have chosen.

CLARA. And your choice is —

CHAS. Myself.

CLARA. I did not think you were so selfish, Charles.

CHAS. Selfishness is a dominant principle through all animation; it is the mainspring of all human actions.

Watch the child playing with his worthless toys,  
And see what selfishness displayed in his joys.  
Now selfishness to the child came unsought,  
Which proves that it was by Nature taught.  
And whatever Nature to us gave,  
Is necessary our life to save.

CLARA.

Charles, as we a lot of children watch,  
That on a playground they each other catch;  
To those, that from their selfishness do part,  
Are the very ones that we give all our heart.  
The world is a playground and we are the children,  
And as we play we are watched.  
If, from the watcher we desire the heart,  
Then, from our selfishness we must part.  
Selfishness to man was by Nature given,  
Selfishness sacrificed rejoices heaven.

CHAS. In this case, Clara, selfishness observed rejoices heaven, because it communicates happiness, and wherever there is happiness there is heaven.

CLARA. That is when the happiness is not all on one side.

CHAS. Our happiness shall be mutual, for no man living can love you as I do. Clara, by virtue of your promise I claim your acceptance of my choice. Will you accept me as the husband I have chosen for you, Clara? [ARNOLD and Bos. in F.

CLARA. Well, since you have taken me at so unfair a disadvantage, Charles, I suppose I must choose the only alternative, and accept your choice.

CHAS. What! Clara my wife! (*Kisses her.*) Oh, happiness! That place on the Ladder of Life, which all the world is striving for, I have reached; the broken places are all passed, and the future is one long sunshine. [Bos. back L., ARN. at back R.]

CLARA. Come, Charles, let us join our friends in the garden, and get aunt and uncle's opinion of our compact.

[*Exit CHAS. and CLARA, F. to R.*

BOS. (*Looking after them. ARN. comes down stage and sits at table absorbed in thought.*) I declah, if this cweture hasn't cut me out. (*Comes down stage.*) Sah, did you witness the performance?

ARN. Eh? Performance?

BOS. Yes, sah; this cweture Clifford's display of affection to my Clawah.

ARN. Your Clara?

BOS. Yes, sah, my Clawah. [Runs to F. looks off R.

ARN. Can there be another in the field? This gentleman does not seem to be overstocked with brains; probably I may use him to advantage, at least I can cause him to appear ridiculous in her eyes, which will remove any affection she may have entertained for him.

BOS. (Looking off R. in F.) Oh, I declah if he hasn't placed his vile mouth against her pwersious lips. (Comes down stage.) Oh, the howid beast!

ARN. (Rise.) Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Boswick?

BOS. Yes, sah; I answer to the cognomen of Mr. Boswick, esquire.

ARN. Excuse my omission of the title, sir. It was mere forgetfulness, not disrespect.

BOS. You stand excused, sah; pwoceed with your business, sah, and bwefly, sah, bwefly, for the pwersent state of my existence will not admit of any lengthy discourse.

ARN. I have noticed that Clara's affections are transferred to this Clifford.

BOS. No, sah, not twansferred; stolen, sah, stolen.

ARN. You may regain them again, sir.

BOS. Only communicate to me the information, sah, and I wemain your humble servant.

ARN. Well, sir; you must first fight a duel.

BOS. Duel! Weally, sah, weally. I—I—I—

ARN. You need not fear, sir; there is not the slightest danger of being injured—physically.

BOS. Oh, I do not fear, sah, not for myself, sah; bu—but I may kill my adversary.

ARN. No fear of that, sir.

BOS. Explain yourself, sah!

ARN. Mr. Clifford may be a coward.

BOS. Yes, sah; I'm all ears,—proceed, sah.

ARN. If you should boldly challenge him to mortal combat, he would become so frightened as to leave the country in order to escape your vengeance; then, Clara, witnessing his disgraceful flight and your gallant bearing, will, of course, renounce him and implore your forgiveness.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah! I hasten to—(running up stage.) But, sah, I—if he'd accept my challenge?

ARN. He dare not accept it, because the law strictly forbids duelling.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah! But, sah, if he'd disregard the law.

ARN. Then he would not dare kill you, because he'd be hung for murder.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah! I hasten to challenge him.

[Exit F. to L.

ARN. He is disposed of. But how to dispose of Clifford without disclosing the relationship.

*Enter CLARA, F. from R.*

Ah, Clara, I was thinking of you.

CLARA. Then you had very disagreeable thoughts, Mr. Arnold.

ARN. No, they were most excellent.

CLARA. Then I shall not disturb them.

ARN. Clara, I have noticed that your affections are bestowed on Mr. Clifford.

CLARA. Well.

ARN. If there was no Mr. Clifford, who would you place your affections on?

CLARA. That is a very difficult question to answer.

ARN. Do I occupy any place in your affections, Clara?

CLARA. Well, I esteem your friendship, Mr. Arnold; but, to be candid, you do not hold any place whatever in my affections.

ARN. That may be probably owing to Mr. Clifford's having insinuated himself so strongly there; but, if Mr. Clifford was so situated that it would be impossible for him to return your love, would there be any possible chance for me?

CLARA. Mr. Arnold, I heard it once remarked you said all women were unthinking creatures, and, consequently, victims to their impressions. Now, you impress me very unfavorably.

ARN. That claims me as the victim to your impressions. But, if I cannot obtain your affections, may I retain your friendship?

CLARA. On one condition.

ARN. Name it.

CLARA. For my husband, as you are aware, I desire Mr. Charles Clifford; aunt objects to him; if you will use your influence to have those objections removed we may remain friends, if not, I fear we may be strangers. [Exit F. to R.]

ARN. My only alternative is to aid this marriage of brother and sister.

*Enter Bos., f. from L. with two cavalry sabres and horse-pistols.*

Bos. Sah, where is the enemy?

ARN. Ah! I believe you will find him in the garden.

Bos. I'll leave the weapons in your charge, sah (*lays weapons on table*), while I seek the enemy. [Exit Bos., f. to R.]

ARN. He may desire me to become his second, and that would be a very ridiculous position. I must avoid it.

*Enter Bos. and CHAS., f. from R.*

Bos. Yes, sah, I have constituted you my mortal enemy.

[Exit ARN., f.]

CHAS. But, sir, I have never injured you.

Bos. I demand we pawation, sah.

CHAS. Reparation! For what?

Bos. For what, sah? Your audacity and pwetended ignorance won't save you, sah. No, sah, you must openly wenounce all your vulgar pwetensions to my Clawah, or, sah, you must die!

CHAS. Oh, nonsense (*walks away*).

*Enter PROF., F. from R. Exit CHAS., F.*

Bos. (*Does not see PROF.*) Then, sah, pwepare to die. (*Turns to table and takes swords.*) My awenging arms will never cease till your base, vulgar carcass lies slaughtered at my conquering feet. Here, sah; choose your weapon, sah (*thrusts swords at PROF., who takes one*), and defend your coward self from my —

[*Bos. discovers his mistake, drops sword.*]

PROF. You confounded idiot! (*going at Bos. with raised sword; Bos. turns and runs, PROF. after him.*) I'll teach you not to challenge a polyologist again. [*Bos. dodges around furniture, PROF. after him; runs off R., across stage, and off L.; then from L. to R. at back, outside F.*]

*Enter Bos., with clothing all torn, comes to front of stage and falls exhausted. PROF. places his foot on Bos., raises his sword.*

PROF. Victory!

*Enter Miss AM., ARN., CLARA, and CHAS., F. from R., engaged in a very animated conversation.*

Ladies and gentlemen, here you see a scientific illustration of the Ladder of Life: the survival of the fittest. (*Picks Bos. up.*) Ah! at last I have found it; it is the long-sought-for missing link of the Darwinian chain of progression. My friends, the science of anthropology, from a polyological standard, teaches —

MISS AM. Professor, Clara's choice of a husband —

PROF. It is anthropological science I'm now discussing, not sexual science.

ARN. Professor, you are aware that Clifford's character —

PROF. That is moral science; the question before the house is anthropological science.

CLARA. Uncle, for a companion I desire Mr. Clifford.

PROF. That is social science. Anthropology is —

MISS AM. Professor, Clara and Clifford desire to become husband and wife.

PROF. Confound the rascal! (*CLARA places her arms about CHAS. neck.*) What! Confound you, sir, you've psychologized the girl! Do you mean this, Clara?

CLARA. Uncle, you requested me to choose a husband; — this is my choice.

PROF. (*Joins their hands.*) There! be happy and prosper.

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

SCENE 1.— *Parlor same as Act II. CLARA and MISS AM. discovered.*

MISS AM. Clara, your husband has proved himself to be a nobler gentleman than I anticipated.

CLARA. Yes, aunt, he is very noble and kind.

MISS AM. Kind is too feeble an expression; it can be plainly seen that he actually worships you.

*Enter PROF. and Bos., f. from L.*

PROF. Confound the women! I say.

MISS AM. What foul wrong have the women committed that calls forth such an expression from a person who rejoices in the possession of a superior intellect?

PROF. If the first law of nature hadn't been a primary consideration with me, they'd have poked my eyes out with their confounded parasols. Doesn't nature teach them man's superiority?

MISS AM. Man's superiority! What constitutes his superiority,—is it his whiskers?

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Isn't it, Pwfessah?

MISS AM. They should remind him of his close resemblance to that bipedal quadruped called *monkey*.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah!

MISS AM. And all some of the whiskered gentry require to complete the resemblance is a tail.

BOS. Yah! Clevah, clevah, Pwfessoh, clevah!

PROF. Then, Darwin surmised correctly. Therefore, all Chinamen must have originally been monkeys, for they still carry their tails.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah!

MISS AM. The monkey would have his tail in its proper place.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Professooh, clevah, clevah!

PROF. More proof of Darwin's sanity; as the position of the tail generally proves the condition of the intellect.

CLARA. There are intellects without tails, uncle. Mr. Boswick has no tail. [Bos. turns around a few times trying to find his tail.

PROF. Which proves that the possession of a tail is not absolutely necessary to the existence of the intellect, thereby corroborating the Darwinistic theory. But as a polyologist, I have presented myself expressly to witness your recent horticultural exploits.

MISS AM. If you will accompany me to the garden, Professor, you may witness them. Clara, will you accompany us?

CLARA. I will remain here, aunt, until my husband comes.

PROF. Boswick, come, and I'll instruct you in polyologized botany.

BOS. No, Pwfessoh; I'll wemain with Clawah.

[*Exit PROF. and Miss AM., f. to R.*

CLARA. And study social astronomy.

BOS. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah!

CLARA. Do you study the stars much now, Mr. Boswick?

BOS. I'm now studying the moon, Clawah.

CLARA. Socially?

BOS. No, no; astwonomically. And last night, as I was working on the moon — By Jove, it was a splendid moon!

CLARA. It was so very cloudy last night, I was not aware the moon was visible.

BOS. Eh? wa—was it cloudy? Oh, yes; so it was. But it wasn't the weal moon, you know, it was only a weflection.

CLARA. Can the moon reflect through the clouds?

BOS. I—I believe — oh, yes; because, you know, the clouds is a lot of steam all clubbed together, like any fellers would club. Now, ye know, steam is a lot of little crystal spheres all stuck together. Now, ye know, the moon, shining on all them little balls, will be weflected fwom one to the other, and when all them little weflections are bunched up together, it will be a big weflection, and, of course, look like the moon, Clawah.

CLARA. Quite an illustration.

BOS. Ain't it, though. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah! But, Clawah, if your husband was mawied to another feller's girl, and you was going to mawy another fellow, wo—would you mawy me?

CLARA. Uncle would be delighted to have you join him in the garden, Mr. Boswick.

BOS. But, Clawah—

CLARA. You will oblige me, sir.

BOS. I hasten to oblige you, Clawah.

[*Exit F. to R.*

CLARA. This creature's words have actually distressed me.

*Enter CHAS. and ARN., F. from L.*

CHAS. What! my dear angel all alone!

CLARA. Charles! (*Runs to CHAS., receives a kiss.*) Oh, I am so glad you've come!

CHAS. Why, my dear, what is the matter? You are all in a flutter. Are you ill?

CLARA. No, Charles, it was only a momentary feebleness; but it is all over now.

CHAS. Yes, my dear, now and forever. Let this face always wear a smile. Angels should never look serious.

CLARA. We cannot always smile, Charles, for there are times when evil forebodings will force themselves upon us, and create unpleasant thoughts.

CHAS. Resist them, as you would a venomous snake, for they are like black clouds sweeping over the clear sky of happiness. When the first black speck makes its appearance on the horizon, drive it back; because, if permitted to advance, another will come, and another, and another, until that once bright sky will become one black mass of clouds. Clara, let us keep our sky of happiness always bright and clear; and, as the bright shining sun dispels all black clouds, so will this bright face, when kept shining with radiant smiles, and our future be one long, uninterrupted series of joys. And when this dear head shall be silvered over with age, your children will around you gather, call you their dear angel mother, and impress upon those ruby lips the seal of love. (*Kiss.*) Oh, by the by, I forgot! here is our very dear friend, Mr. Arnold.

CLARA. I am very happy to meet you, Mr. Arnold; but, Charles,

you and Mr. Arnold should be very hungry. If you will have a little patience, I shall serve you some refreshments. [Exit, F. to R.

CHAS. Mr. Arnold, be seated, please; consider yourself at home, and make yourself as comfortable as you wish. Here is the latest literature (*gives book or paper*), and here are the best Havanas I could procure; but the ladies seriously object to my smoking in the house; — I don't know how they would consider it in your case.

ARN. I shall take it for granted that they would consider my smoking in the same light, and will defer the pleasure until —

CHAS. After refreshments, then we both can enjoy the luxury in the garden.

ARN. Yes, that will be excellent. I presume, Mr. Clifford, you must be very happy?

CHAS. Yes, very happy. The presence of so divine an angel as I possess, would create a sunshine of happiness to the most unhappy. If all those dear angels that walk our earth only knew what portion of the world's happiness they held in their hands, I don't think they would abuse it, do you?

ARN. I never say anything against the fair sex. A man's interests are not advanced any by finding fault with that which does not affect him personally. But, has the Professor made you familiar with your wife's origin?

CHAS. No; I've been so wrapped in the present, that I never gave the past a thought; besides, I have no desire to know the past, be it agreeable or disagreeable. There are a good many people in this world who might lead a very happy life, if they would only let the past be past.

ARN. I have received very important information recently, which, if I did not communicate, I should consider myself a criminal for life.

CHAS. A criminal for life! Why, my dear sir, that would be a very disagreeable consideration. I should advise you to communicate it.

ARN. I fear it may interfere with your happiness.

CHAS. Then dispel your fears, sir. You cannot communicate anything that will in the least affect my happiness, because it is so firmly established, that I believe it would be impossible to affect it.

ARN. But, sir, I fear it may.

CHAS. Nonsense! Why, sir, I have never injured a soul in the whole course of my life, therefore I cannot be affected; and as for my wife, why, sir, she is an angel, and above every suspicion, consequently she cannot be affected. So, proceed; what have you discovered?

ARN. That the lady you call your wife is —

CHAS. Well, the lady I call my wife is —

ARN. Your sister.

CHAS. My sister! If you are insane, sir, oblige me with another specimen of your insanity.

ARN. I was never more sane in my life.

CHAS. Such an expression from a sane man is an insult. Arnold,

to me Clara is all perfection. She is the idol which I worship; and to satisfy her slightest wish, I would willingly lay down my life. Now, sir, consider how I must feel towards the man who dares offer the slightest insult.

ARN. But, sir, I have not insulted her.

CHAS. To call my wife my sister is a foul insult. By heaven, he who insults my wife shall not go unpunished!

ARN. Be calm, sir; I meant no offence; but I am fully prepared to prove that your wife is your sister.

CHAS. You lie! (*Slaps ARN. across the face.*)

ARN. Ah, a blow! Sir, I demand —

*Enter CLARA, F. from R.*

CLARA. Refreshments are all ready. Come, Charles. Mr. Arnold, will you honor us? Why, what is the matter? Mr. Arnold, what have you been doing with my husband?

ARN. Not anything. I was simply remarking what an excellent plot the earliest portion of your life would furnish to write a novel from. Your husband, I believe, has never heard it. I think it would interest him.

CLARA. I didn't intend to tell you all my history, Charles, until my birthday, because it was on my birthday that I was told; but to please you I will tell it now. Several years ago, when I was a little baby, uncle rescued me and my brother. I never told you I had a brother; but I had, for uncle saved us both from a wrecked ship called the "Argus." He took charge of me himself, and gave my brother to a Mr. Revere, and placed on him a small medal, with the word "Argus" on it.

CHAS. Ah, my God! what do I hear?

CLARA. Charles! What ails you? Why do you shake so? Are you ill? Mr. Arnold, see to my husband, while I get something to revive him. [*Runs off R.*]

CHAS. Oh, we were so happy! Our life was one bright sunshine; to me all nature smiled. But now — Oh! a black and fearful cloud over our life now hangs, and the future is a hopeless, gloomy desolation. Oh, death were better!

ARN. Now, sir, you see how you have wronged me.

CHAS. Oh, sir, do forgive me! On my knees I humbly beg your pardon.

*Enter CLARA, R.*

Oh, sir, for heaven's sake, do not speak a word of this to Clara!

CLARA. What does this mean?

CHAS. Oh, question me not; I shall go mad!

CLARA. Mr. Arnold, what does this mean?

ARN. Well, you see, Clara, he is —

(CHAS. *places hand over ARN.'s mouth.*)

CHAS. Tell it not.

CLARA. I will hear it.

CHAS. Oh, no, no, Clara; you must not hear it.

CLARA. By what right do you keep this from me? Robert Arnold, I demand an explanation.

ARN. Well, Clara, your husband —

CHAS. Silence! Let your lips ever dare breathe one word of this to a living soul, and, though mountains, forests, and seas should lie between us, I'll face them all to find you, and I'll silence you forever!

CLARA. Robert Arnold, again I say I demand it.

ARN. Well, Clara —

CHAS. Silence! Sir, I command you to leave this house! Go! (*Tableau.* CHARLES, C., pointing F. ARN., R., front facing CHAS.

CLARA L., front facing CHAS.)

SCENE 2. — *Garden.*

*Enter ARN., L., hat in hand, walking very fast, and looking to rear.*

ARN. For this insult I will make him — No, no; I must not give way to passion; I must be guided by reason, not instinct. There is no occurrence in life that a cool, calculating brain may not work to its advantage. Now, how can I work this to my advantage? Can it be possible that he desires to retain Clara as his wife?

Bos. (*Outside.*) Yah, ha, ha! Clevah, clevah!

ARN. Ah! Nature has never made anything in vain. All things were created for some definite purpose,—and this silly creature was created for my purpose.

*Enter Bos., R., with garden plant.*

Bos. Yah, ha! Mr. Arnold, the Pwofessoh twies to persuade me that I'm Darwin's missing link; and he calls this shwub a — a — ah! — a gweat long name with twenty syllables, and each syllable is a different language. Yah, ha!

ARN. Ah, yes; I am aware of the Professor's fondness to display his peculiar nomenclature.

Bos. His what? I weckon, Arnold, you've been studying polyology, ain't you?

ARN. Some—not much. But what time does Mr. Clifford generally go to his place of business?

Bos. About twee o'clock.

ARN. Three o'clock?

Bos. Yes, sah; but I must go and give Clawah some lessons in botany. I've been twying to instwuct her in astwonomy; but she don't like astwonomy, it's too scientific for a woman's bwain, so I'll twy botany.

[*Exit L.*

*Enter PROF. and MISS AM., R., PROF. with garden-pot with plant.*

PROF. Yes, this is an exotosized, pereniated, and unceferated diminutive specimen of myristica moschata, indigenous to those regions in which the atmospherical — Ah, Arnold! just accompany us into the house, and —

ARN. No, no, Professor; I shall never enter that house while that rascal, Clifford, remains there, — he has most basely insulted me.

MISS AM. Insulted you! For what?

ARN. Well, I—I had just accidentally formed the acquaintance of his former wife, and he, fearing an exposure, rudely ejected me.

PROF. Robert Arnold, are you mad?

CLARA. (*Outside.*) Oh dear! Oh dear!

*Enter CLARA, L.*

Oh aunt! uncle! my husband has gone mad! Mr. Arnold, what have you done to my husband?

ARN. I am very sorry to speak ill of your husband, Clara; but my anxiety for your happiness compels me to expose him.

CLARA. Expose my husband!

MISS AM. Arnold says your husband has another wife, Clara.

CLARA. Another wife? Oh, no, no, no! he is too honest for that.

ARN. An honest man fears no exposure.

PROF. Arnold, explain yourself.

ARN. For several days past I have seen him promenading with a lady on his arm. At first I paid no attention to it, thinking, probably, it was only a friend; but yesterday I overheard him call her his dear wife; and, desiring further information, I called on the lady, when I was informed that she was his lawful wife. So, to-day, I notified him that if he persisted in retaining the companionship of his former wife I would expose him. Then he fell upon his knees and begged of me not to speak a word of it to Clara.

CLARA. Yes, I saw him on his knees, and heard him say those words.

ARN. And, as I was about to expose him, he placed his hand over my mouth—

CLARA. Yes, he did.

ARN. And threatened to kill me if I dare breathe a word. You saw all this yourself, Clara?

CLARA. I did, I did.

PROF. Arnold, you must accuse Clifford of this in my presence.

MISS AM. No, no, Professor; if he is the character Mr. Arnold represents him to be, he will deny every word, and will take measures to remove all evidence. We must have proof of his perfidy without his knowledge. Besides, I see no reason to doubt Mr. Arnold; he cannot gain anything by it, and all gentlemen are above either prejudice or animosity.

PROF. Can you give me ocular demonstration of this, Arnold?

ARN. I believe he is to meet her about three o'clock to-day; but if I have been the means of any disagreeable annoyance, through my anxiety for your happiness, I ask pardon; and as it is very painful to me, I desire to be excused from all future connection with it, as I have very important business to-day which cannot be postponed. You must excuse me. [*Exit R.*]

MISS AM. Come, dear, don't weep. If this is true, it is only the loss of a man; the world is full of men ready to kneel to any lady who condescends to smile on them. [*Exit L. with CLARA and PROF.*

SCENE 3.—*Room, very plain, table, c., with lamp and small tin teapot attached. Sewing-machine near table. JENNY discovered seated at sewing-machine in operation.*

JEN. (*Song.*) How very pleasant labor is when you have some one to love you. I believe love is the noblest attribute of man. How very unpleasant this world would be without it. (*Knock at door.*) Come in.

*Enter ARN. through small door in F.*

Robert! (*Rises and goes to ARN.*)

ARN. Well, Jenny, I suppose you thought I had forgotten you?

JEN. I fear you may one of those days.

ARN. That day will never come, Jenny; I love you too much for that; but, Jenny, I fear that my affections for you are not reciprocated.

JEN. Why, Robert, those words wroth me very much. I don't deserve such treatment.

ARN. Forgive my doubts, Jenny; but my affection for you is so strong that I almost feared you might be dissembling.

JEN. Robert!

ARN. Jenny, I am going to relieve myself of those doubts by testing your love. I have engaged in a very important transaction which requires the assistance of a lady, and it is of so very delicate a nature, that I fear love could not stand the test unless it was genuine. Jenny, can your love stand a slight test which will advance my interests?

JEN. Any assistance I can render, that is not in opposition to morality or my character as a lady, you may command.

ARN. We have in our club a very bashful young man, so one gentleman bet quite a large amount that he dare not look a lady straight in the face. Then, I very foolishly bet all I possessed that he would walk the street with his arm about a lady's waist. Now, if that young man don't walk the street with his arm around a lady I am a beggar. Jenny, will you assist me in this?

JEN. Oh Robert! this is very unfair of you to request so unlady-like a performance from me; besides, as he is so very bashful I should be obliged to ask him place his arm about me.

ARN. No; you can pretend to be unwell.

JEN. I cannot do this. Robert, a poor girl like me has only her character to recommend her to the world; and, when it becomes tainted with the least suspicion, it is gone never to return.

ARN. Then your love to me will not bear a simple test?

JEN. Yes, Robert, any test that is honorable—but this—Oh, no, no!

ARN. What is there so very immoral in having the arm of a young man of unquestionable character about a lady's waist? Jenny, the love that will not bear so simple a test is a heartless dissembling. All I possess is at stake; my whole future life depends upon this; into your hands I've placed myself; at your disposal is my future happiness or misery; it is your love that can save me from falling into beggary and degradation; but you will calmly see me fall, and,

perhaps, laugh at my folly. Is that love? Well, if it is, then forever farewell.

JEN. No, no, Robert, I will save you. Where shall I see this young man?

ARN. When you are ready I will direct you.

JEN. (*Puts on hat and shawl.*) I am ready; lead the way.

TABLEAU.

SCENE 4.—*Street.*

*Enter CLARA, L.*

CLARA. Oh, if this should be so, it will break my heart! Why should he be so cruel to me,—to me that loved him so much! Oh, can it be possible that he is so great a monster! Oh, no, no, no! I will not believe this. I'll go back home again. (*Going L.*) Ha! Am I dreaming? Oh, that it was a dream, and not a reality which I now see! My husband it is! Oh, how eagerly he clasps her to his bosom! How affectionately she looks upon him; and he—Yes, he returns that look! O merciful Heaven, support me! (*Retires back.*)

*Enter CHAS. and JENNY, L. CHAS. supporting JENNY.*

CHAS. Do you feel any better, now?

JEN. Yes, sir, thank you. Oh, sir, I thank you very much; you are very kind, sir.

CHAS. Are you subject to those—annoyances?

JEN. No, sir; this is the first—and the last.

CHAS. I am very glad to see you so confident. I presume you have a medicine that is sure?

JEN. Yes, sir; my determination.

CHAS. Very good; the imagination has a wonderful effect upon diseases.

JEN. Oh, sir, do forgive me; I fear I may injure you.

CHAS. You do not injure me any; I am but too happy for the privilege of performing an act of kindness to any one; but if you will give me your destination I shall be very happy to escort you there.

JEN. Thank you, sir, thank you; I'm only going a little farther. But do forgive me. [*Exit CHAS. and JENNY, R.*]

CLARA. Oh, monster! Ungrateful dissembler! You have pierced your serpent fangs deep into my heart. O merciful Heaven, forgive me for ever taking so vile a wretch to my bosom! And now, from out my heart I tear every thought of him, and in the place of love I now place hate, and with that hate upon my breath, I now do curse him! (*Staggers and falls into PROF. arms, who has entered just in time to receive her.*)

PROF. Oh, my poor, dear, heart-broken child! Oh, base, heartless fiend, for every pang you have caused this dear, innocent heart I'll make you suffer threefold. Heaven bless you, dear! heaven bless you! Come, dear, come to our home, and may that Great Power which rules over all nature guard and protect you from all future misery.

*Exit PROF. and CLARA, L.*

*Enter ARN., L.*

ARN. My plot is working admirably, but rather painful. I almost believe myself to be a villain. My conscience begins to question me, but I have gone too far to retract; I must go on. One lie requires another to sustain it, until it becomes one mass of lies. In nature nothing succeeds but at the expense of some other thing. Now, I am but a result of nature, only; and am therefore governed by nature. It is a natural law that I do all in my power to become happy and successful; then, if my happiness be another's unhappiness, why, it isn't my fault, it is the fault of nature; therefore, conscience lie still. [Exit R.]

SCENE 5.—*Parlor, same as Scene 1. Clara discovered reclining on sofa. Enter Miss Am. in street dress. Doffs them.*

MISS AM. Are you any better, Clara?

CLARA. Yes, aunt, thanks to your care, I am quite well. If I had always observed your instructions how much happier I should now be.

MISS AM. Disobedience is always accompanied by unhappiness; disobedience is the crime performed; unhappiness is the punishment inflicted. There is now a very painful duty to be imposed on you, Clara. It was you who introduced this man Clifford into our happy home; he must not remain here any longer, and it is you, Clara, who must eject him. Are you strong enough to perform this?

CLARA. Oh, when I glance at the past, I almost forget the present; he was so noble, generous, and kind!

MISS AM. Forget the past and think only of the future. The attorney will be here presently with all the necessary documents to sever your connection with this man. You will request him to attach his signature to them.

*Enter PROF. and ATTORNEY, F. from L.*

Are the papers ready?

PROF. All that is required to complete them are the signatures.

MISS AM. Clara, you will take your stand at this table, obtain his signature to all the documents, and then command him to leave your presence forever.

CLARA. Oh, aunt, I cannot do this!

MISS AM. Clara, remember that this false creature was by you snatched from a beggar's grave, and through a long illness carefully nurtured. To his happiness you have devoted your life. What has he given in return? False smiles, base, flattering words, and a broken heart.

CLARA. Oh!

MISS AM. To his other wife, as you have seen, he gives his real smiles, his whole heart and love.

CLARA. Oh, aunt!

MISS AM. To you he dissembles; and for the love of his other wife how easily he sacrifices you.

CLARA. Say no more, aunt. (*Rises*) He shall go back again to

that cold, merciless world from which I took him. Uncle, inform Mr. Clifford I command his presence. (*Exit PROF., F. to L.*)

MISS AM. Mr. Attorney, what are your papers to be signed?

ATTORNEY. (*At table.*) This paper, on receiving the husband's signature, with witnesses, will be a sufficient instrument to dissolve all matrimonial connection that heretofore existed between them.

*Enter PROF. and CHAS., F. from L.*

MISS AM. Clara, Mr. Clifford is present. I request you to be as brief and expeditious as possible.

CLARA. (*At table, L. c.*) Mr. Clifford, here is a document which awaits your signature; it severs the bond which unites you and I. Sign. (*Chas. signs.*) Oli, how eagerly he signs it! If he did but refuse, I—I might forgive him; but now, the last spark of love I held for him he has signed it away forever. Are there any more documents to be signed?

ATTORNEY. Yes, here is one on which the husband's signing transfers to the wife all property he has accumulated through her instrumentality.

CLARA. Mr. Clifford—sign.

CHAS. Clara!

CLARA. Sign. (*Chas. signs.*)

PROF. Many a man would willingly sign away his wife; but I never saw a man sign away his property so easy. There is something mysterious about this. Charles Clifford, I ask for an explanation of your recent conduct; but remember, a lie will not advance you the slightest, and a true statement will make your position no worse.

CHAS. O-h!

PROF. Will you give an explanation?

CHAS. Oh, I cannot!

PROF. Are you guilty of an attachment to any other woman?

CHAS. Guilty? Other woman? O-h! believe me guilty of anything, but do not question me!

MISS AM. Conclusive evidence of guilt. Honesty fears no questioning. Clara, proceed with your business.

CLARA. Mr. Clifford, here is a piece of wood which you appeared very anxious to preserve. I have taken good care of it. Here, take it again. (*CHAS. takes piece of stick from CLARA.*)

CHAS. Fred! dear, noble friend, I had forgotten you! In prosperity we forget old friends. Oh, how I long to see your kind face again, and clasp your honest hand once more!

CLARA. Sir, this valise is your original property; within it are the garments that you wore when first I saw you. Oh, how I loved those rags! I thought they once encased a noble heart. But they are yours, sir; take them (*CHAS. takes valise*), and from my presence forever—go! (*Points F. Picture.*)

CHAS. Clara, Clara, whatever wrong you may think I have done, I pray of you not to hate me, for with my whole soul I love you!

MISS AM. Then, show your love by obeying. Go!

[*CHAS. in F. CLARA falls.*

CHAS. No, no, Clara. I am—

[Runs to CLARA.]

PROF. No longer her husband! Go!

[PROF. standing in front of CHAS. and pointing to F.]

CHAS. (In F.) May heaven bless you!

T A B L E A U .

CURTAIN.

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A C T I V .

SCENE.—*Street, same as Scene 3, Act I. Snow falling, street-lamp with flame.*

*Enter POLICE, L., back, and stands under lamp.*

POLICE. Ugh! disagreeable weather.

*Enter MIKE, R. Very small bundle suspended from stick over shoulder.*

POLICE. Say, my man, where are you travelling to?

MIKE. Eh? Is it to myself your sphaking, sir?

POLICE. I am. Where is your destination?

MIKE. I haven't any, sir. I have nothing only the few duds I brought wid me.

POLICE. You don't understand me, I see.

MIKE. I suppose I don't, sir; my poor head has got so bothered that I don't undherstand myself fwhat I'm goin' to sphake until I sphake it; because ye know, sir, that a man in Ireland and a man in America is two different men.

POLICE. I want to know!

MIKE. Ar'nt I goin' to tell ye, sir.

POLICE. Well, tell me, what is the difference?

MIKE. Well, sir, the difference 'twixt an Irish Irishman and a Yankee Irishman is moighty big, sir, moighty big; because you see, sir, if the man in Ireland had only two praties, and he knowed you was hungry, he'd never tasht a bite till he'd give ye one of them; and if ye didn't take it, upon my soul, sir, he moight get mad enough to give the shellaleh. But if a man in this country had two praties, and he knowed you was hungry—

POLICE. I suppose he wouldn't give you any.

MIKE. Oh, sir, he wouldn't be as hard-hearted as that; he'd give ye some, but it would only be the shkin;—because, ye see, sir, there is a shmall dhrop of Ireland in every Irishman that he can't get away from, and the harder he thrys to get away from it the harder it shticks to him; and ye see, sir, Ireland's part of him would be wanting to give ye the shkin, but the other part of him would be shivering fraid ye moight take it.

POLICE. Ha, ha, ha! But aint you a little selfish yourself?

MIKE. Fwhat? Fwhat kind of a little fish did ye say I was myself?

POLICE. A little selfish.

MIKE. A little shelfish! Ye omadhaun, ye; bad cess to ye, I'm as big as yourself, and if ye don't believe me, ye can thry; and I am no fish, and I have no shell upon me.

POLICE (*Going R.*) Ha, ha, ha! Then you are not a shell-back? Ha, ha, ha! [Exit R.

MIKE. Yes, they are all aloike; nobody cares for anybody only hisself. Well, I'll resht meself awhile here; me thramping all day has wore the bottoms of me feet out. (*Sits down under lamp.*)

*Enter ARN., L.*

ARN. So far all works well; my plot succeeds beyond every expectation. I now hold within my grasp that which all the world is striving for,—riches, which is happiness; for in riches only can happiness be found. This universal race for it proves there is no happiness in poverty. Honest poverty no crime. Hem! I presume, the parties who originated that saying had not the ability to become either rich or dishonest,—for successful dishonesty requires superior ability; and the poor fool who leaves the honest paths of life to become dishonest, and when, through lack of ability he fails, and is compelled to return again to his honest plodding, why, then, he will say that honest poverty is no crime. Anybody can be honest; and the extreme respect which riches command proves poverty to be a social crime of the first magnitude. Then, by becoming rich, I avoid a crime. [*Going R., stumbles over MIKE.*]

MIKE. Bad cess to your legs, are ye thrying to walk upon me?

ARN. I did not see you, sir.

MIKE. And am I so shmall that I can't be seen?

ARN. Ah! This Irishman may be of service to me. Are you seeking employment, sir?

MIKE. Am I fwhat?

ARN. Don't you want a job?

MIKE. Faith, then, I do, sir, if I only get paid for it; but I've had so many jobs without any pay that I almost don't want any job?

ARN. You shall be paid, sir. What is your special business?

MIKE. My fwhat?

ARN. What can you do the easiest and the best?

MIKE. Aiting, dhrinking, and shleeping, to be coarse.

ARN. No, no, no! What have you been working at?

MIKE. Oh, I see now fwhat you mane. I have been thrying to see if I could find any news of two childer that comed over a great many years ago in a ship that was drownded fwhich they called the "Argus."

ARN. What? The name of that ship you say was—

MIKE. The "Argus," sir.

ARN. The "Argus"! Why, that's the name of the ship that Clifford and Clara were rescued from! Say, my friend, was there a Captain Harold on that ship?

MIKE. Faith, then, there was, sir,—him and his wife and two shmall childer.

ARN. Yes, brother and sister.

MIKE. Indeed they warn't, sir; they wor no relation. But I

heared me uncle say that he heared me father say that the captain shwore a moighty big oath that fwhen they would be big they musht marry each other.

ARN. How do you know they were not brother and sister?

MIKE. Becase my father tould my uncle. You see, sir, my uncle was my father after my father was drownded.

ARN. Yes, yes, I know! But tell me all you know of the children.

MIKE. Well, sir, Captain Harold and Leftenant Ambrey wor school byes together, and fwhen they growed up to be men they both lishted in the army, only they wor leftenants when they lishted; and afther a fwhile Leftenant Ambrey got married to a purty girl that gave him a son, and the delicate crature died fwhen the boy was born; and the leftenant took it so much to heart that he died hisself in a shmall while afther; and then Captain Harold took the bye hisself to be brought up as his own, because the captain was married all this time and didn't have any childer of his own. But afther a little fwhile the captain had a daughter, — no, I mane the captain's wife had the daughter, — and then she tazed the captain so hard to lave the army that he got mad and laved it, and he was coming to America when the ship got wraked, and they all got drownded only the two childer.

ARN. How do you know this?

MIKE. Becase my father was a corporal in the same regiment, and he lugged my father along wid him fwhen he left the army, becase my father used to take care of him.

ARN. This information must not go any farther. How do you know the children were not lost?

MIKE. Becase we heered in Ireland, sir, that a crazy schoolmashter shtole them from the ship fwhen the ship was drownding, and they shwam to the dhry land along wid him, and he gave the boy to a Mr. Revere, and nobody knows fwhat he done wid the girl.

ARN. This Irishman must be disposed of. Sir, you are now in my employ; just step over there (*points L.*) and await my coming, but don't speak a word to anybody.

MIKE. Indeed I 'ont, sir; I'll grab a tight hould of each jaw, and then I can't shpake. [Exit L.]

ARN. How very strange that this fellow should come direct to me. If I was superstitious I'd say that there was some invisible hand directing this plot.

*Enter JEN., L.*

JEN. O-h! how this sharp, cold air mercilessly pierces throngh my whole body! I am now between two dreadful extremities placed: on one side, and behind me, is that dreadful gulf of starvation upon whose brink I now do stand; on the other side, and in front of me, is a horrid, yawning chasm, anxiously and eagerly stretching forth its jaws to clasp me: 'tis a life of sin and shame. I can neither advance nor retreat, — I must choose between them; but which, oh which? Life is precious although it be miserable, for, if once lost, it can never be found again; but to hold it at so great a sacrifice! O-h! (*Kneels*) O just and merciful Heaven! into thy hands

I place myself; upon thy mercy I now do call; direct to me some kind friend that will assist me by those dreadful extremities!

ARN. Jenny, Heaven has answered your prayer. I am that friend!

JEN. Robert Arnold! No, no, you are not the friend! You were sent to tempt me into that gulf of sin and shame. No, Robert Arnold, I refuse, and I now choose the other gulf of starvation; though I lose my body, yet I'll save my soul. Leave me! Go!

ARN. Oh! very well; but remember, a rational being will keep body and soul together at any sacrifice, because when they are together we know where they are, but when they are apart we don't know where they are. (*Retires back.*)

*Enter POLICE, R., back.*

POLICE. Helloa, Arnold, how goes everything? (*Shakes hands.*)

ARN. Quite well, thank you. I was about to request a favor of you.

POLICE. Well, I may grant your request, provided there be something more substantial than acquaintance-sake to back it.

ARN. That will be all right. You see that girl there?

POLICE. I do.

ARN. If she is not taken care of she will either freeze or starve to death.

POLICE. Why should you care?

ARN. Well, she has been quite an intimate friend of mine, but through some mistake she has become very angry with me, and refuses to accept my assistance. Now, if you will exert your influence to have her confined within some asylum, — or even a prison would be preferable to have her starve in the street, — I will make it all right.

POLICE. That's what I call generosity. I'll do it. Come, let us clinch the bargain, and we will organize ourselves into a committee of two to raise the fallen. Ha, ha, ha! [Exit R.

*Enter CHARLES, R.*

CHAS. Yes, 'tis here where we are to meet. I remember it well, for it was here, one year ago to-day, from the lowest step of this Ladder of Life, I started on my way up to happiness; and I reached it. Oh, I was so happy! But 'tis gone, and I am again on the lowest step; but this time I am on my way down to despair, for no angel hands guide me now. O Fred, Fred! Your parting words still ring in my years, to beware of the broken places on the Ladder of Life; for without assistance no one can pass them. Poor fellow! I hope he has not met any broken places, for I cannot assist him, as food has not crossed my lips since I left happiness.

JEN. Sir, please, sir, I am starving! Oh, sir, if you ever had a sister, imagine her in my condition, and what you would do for her! I now implore you do the same for me. One little kind act will not injure your body any, sir, and it may advance your soul.

CHAS. O-h! I have not anything to give, for I am starving myself; but if you will wait a few moments, I have a friend who

promised, one year ago, to meet me here this day, and he will give you something, but do not mention my sister. May Heaven guard and prevent her ever being reduced to your condition!

JEN. Oh! sir, you must be a very kind brother! I had a brother once, a smiling, rosy little boy, who was left at our house and adopted by us. He was my constant companion and playmate. Oh, how he did love me! and how I did love to tease him, because he would get angry and squeeze me in his arms, and kiss me ever so many times. But one day mother died, and father gave me to an aunt. My little playmate came to me, and, placing his arms about me, kissed me very fondly, and said, "Jenny, I am now going away; this kiss I now give you I want you to keep for me, for when I am a big man I'll come back again and claim that kiss." Then around my neck he placed this medal.

CHAS. Jenny! Jenny! that kiss I now do claim.

JEN. You are —

CHAS. Your playmate, Charles Clifford!

JEN. Heaven has answered my prayer! Charles! (*Embrace.*)

CHAS. Oh, my poor little Jenny! what has reduced you to this condition?

JEN. 'Tis a sad, sad story, Charles! My life has been one series of misfortunes.

CHAS. It shall be so no longer, Jenny, for when Fred comes I will place you in his charge, if he is in good circumstances; but if he is not, then we will make you our queen, and together we will labor to make your future one long sunshine.

JEN. Oh, Charles, you have created for me a heaven on earth! But are you sure your friend will come?

CHAS. Fred would swim seas to keep his word. And so you have preserved this medal all these years?

JEN. Yes, I have guarded it well; but now that I have found you, Charles, let me place it on you again. [Places medal on CHAS.]

CHAS. How very cold you are!

JEN. I was cold, but I am not now; I am very warm and very sleepy (*displays drowsiness*).

CHAS. O Heaven! you are freezing to death! (*Doffs coat.*) Here, let me place this about you.

JEN. (*Pushes coat aside.*) No, no! you are cold yourself, Charles; I am warm enough here (*nestles closely to CHAS.*). When your friend comes wake me, if I'm asleep, Charles.

CHAS. Jenny! Jenny! don't close your eyes; you may never open them again! Oh, Fred, Fred! why don't you come! Jenny! Jenny! wake up!

*Enter POLICE, r. back.*

JEN. Oh, Charles, don't shake me so!

CHAS. (*Rubbing snow to JENNY.*) Oh, Fred, Fred! why don't you come!

POLICE. What are you doing with that girl?

CHAS. Oh, sir, she is freezing!

POLICE. I'll take charge of her.

CHAS. Thank you, sir, thank you!

POLICE. Come, come, young woman, wake up here!

JEN. Yes; has your friend come?

POLICE. Yes. Come with me.

JEN. Ah! Go with you?

CHAS. Yes, Jenny, go. I will accompany you.

POLICE. You will, will you? Now, you just accompany yourself the other way (*points r.*). Young woman, you come with me.

JEN. Oh, sir, please do not part us!

POLICE. Come, come!

[*Going to L.*

JEN. (With hands stretched out towards CHAS.) Charles!

CHAS. Mr. Officer, upon my knees, I beg of you not to part us.

POLICE. (Motions to strike CHAS.) Get out of my way! (To JENNY.) Come, come along here!

JEN. (Struggling.) No, no, I will not go! (Escapes and goes to CHAS.) Charles, save me!

POLICE. By the eternal, you must come, if I have to tear every limb in your body! (Forcing her from CHAS.) Beggar, let her go!

CHAS. Oh, sir, please don't use her rough!

POLICE. Get out! (Slaps CHAS. across the face.) Come, come, you cursed—

CHAS. Let her go, I say!

POLICE. What! Miserable wretch, take that!

[*Strikes CHAS. with club.*

JEN. Ah! My God, you have killed him!

POLICE. Come, come, you she-devil.

JEN. No, no, I will not go! Charles! Charles! Help, help!

POLICE. Damn you (*strikes JEN. with club*), will that tame you?

JEN. Ugh!

[*Totters.*

CHAS. Ah! Monster (*strikes POLICE, who falls*), will that tame you? (CHAS. goes to r. with JEN.) Courage, Jenny! Fear not; I'll protect you. All human brutes are only cowards when faced with determination.

POLICE. Give up that girl.

CHAS. Come and take her.

*Enter ARN., r. back.*

POLICE. Fool! I don't want to kill you; but don't you know that when you defy me, it is the law and full power of all society you are defying?

CHAS. I am desperate, and desperation knows no law nor fears no society!

POLICE. That girl I will have!

CHAS. Then it must be over my dead body!

POLICE. Over your dead body be it then. [*Rushes at CHAS. with upraised club; they struggle; POLICE hand on CHAS.' throat.*

CHAS. (Suffocating.) O God!

POLICE. Now, dog! [With raised club. JEN. seizes descending club. JEN., POLICE, and CHAS. struggle.

JEN. Help, help, help! [Wrenches club from POLICE, and stands r. back. CHAS. and POLICE struggle to L.

POLICE. Help, help, help! Arnold, in the name of the State I

command your assistance. [ARN. comes down L., raises hand to strike CHAS. JEN. rushes to L., strikes ARN. with club; ARN. falls; JEN. drops club, and stands in an attitude of horror.

JEN. Oh, what have I done! [CHAS. throws POLICE, picks up club, and goes R.

CHAS. Now, I am armed.

POLICE. And so am I. (Draws pistol.) Miserable wretch! (JEN. runs to R., between POLICE and CHAS.) Take that. [Discharges pistol. JEN. screams and falls R.

CHAS. Ah, killed! [POLICE throws CHAS. to L. POLICE rushing on CHAS. from L. to R. ARN. with raised knife rushing on CHAS. from L. to R.; as they meet at CHAS. he dodges and POLICE receives ARN.'s knife and falls TABLEAU, CHAS. R., JEN. lying on stage at his feet, ARN. L., POLICE lying on stage at his feet.

CHAS. Jenny! Jenny! speak to me; oh, speak to me!

ARN. I have killed the wrong man!

*Enter FRED., R., back. Enter POLICE No. 2, L., back.*

POLICE No. 2. Sir, did you fire that shot?

FRED. No, sir; I did not.

CHAS. Ah, she moves! She lives! She lives!

FRED. Charles! Charles!

CHAS. Fred!

ARN. Arrest that man! (Points to CHAS.) I accuse him of this foul murder! [TABLEAU. ARN. and POLICE 1, L. POLICE 2, C., back. CHAS., FRED., JEN., R.

CURTAIN. If curtain rises on tableau, ARN. and POLICE 1 at L.

CHAS. handcuffed, and Police 2 c., back. FRED on one knee supporting JEN.'s head on his arm at R.

## A C T V.

SCENE 1.—Parlor, same as the others. CLARA and ARN. discovered seated R. on sofa.

CLARA. I had no idea that my presence could create so much sunshine.

ARN. As the sun is to the earth so your presence is to me. The earth without the sun would be a dreary, black, and dismal place indeed; so I without you would be a gloomy and unhappy being. But with that angelic face—

CLARA. There, there, Robert; I perceive you are a flatterer. Where there is flattery there are fools.

ARN. Yes, where there is flattery there are fools; but to praise the beautiful is not flattery. The person who can look on a beautiful perfection without a word of praise, is devoid of all the finer feelings which nature has bestowed on man. But, Clara, we must not quarrel on our wedding-day.

CLARA. Nor any other day, Robert, I hope.

ARN. Not if my devotion to your happiness can prevent it.

CLARA. Thanks, Robert; I fear I can never repay your generous devotion.

ARN. It requires no payment, Clara. I but simply sought my own happiness; because, when you are happy I am happy. Ever since your unfortunate marriage —

CLARA. Oh, speak not of that! I try to forget that I ever was married. If I had accepted your generous proposals when first offered, oh, how much happier I should be! Hopes that are past, we can never recall.

ARN. But in their place we can new hopes install.

*Enter Miss Am., f. from R.*

MISS AM. Ah, my children, you will now enjoy real happiness; something which all the world is striving for, but very few ever attain.

*Enter PROF., f. from L.*

Professor, is all arranged for the marriage?

PROF. Yes, all the preliminaries have received my personal supervision; and as soon as you desire, the ecclesiastical gentleman will pronounce the words which fasten the matrimonial knot; ecclesiastically, at least. Is there anything more I can do for you, Clara?

CLARA. Yes, uncle, one thing more.

PROF. Name it, my dear, and it is yours.

CLARA. I wish there was to be another marriage, uncle.

PROF. Another marriage!

CLARA. Yes, uncle. Now, if you would only marry aunt, how much pleasanter my marriage would be.

PROF. Why, my dear, she is a confirmed man-hater.

CLARA. Her ill will towards the men, uncle, is only the result of not having a man.

PROF. Well, if that's the case, then if I should direct any matrimonial insinuations towards her she might become so overjoyed that she'd scratch my eyes out.

CLARA. I will ask her for you, uncle.

[*Dumb conversation between Miss Am. and CLARA.*

PROF. Now, I can harangue the multitude for hours on the beauties of my polyological nomenclature, and see the working of their soul through their eyes. But when it comes to storm a woman on her pet subject of love, I feel like a raw soldier before an impregnable fortress which he is about to assault.

MISS AM. Professor, am I correctly informed?

PROF. I—I—isn't she, Clara?

MISS AM. Have you expressed a desire to form a matrimonial connection with me, sir?

PROF. I—I think; I believe I have; haven't I, Clara?

CLARA. You have, uncle.

MISS AM. Sir, business of that nature requires the utmost delicacy; you should, therefore, make a personal application to me individually; and if you wish to proceed it will be necessary that you should do so.

PROF. Well, here goes: Miss Amariah, you see before you the great expounder of natural phenomenas; the originator of a polyological nomenclature incomprehensible to all vulgarity; a man who has mastered and reduced all heretofore chaotic classifications and theories to a firm, scientific basis,—a man who is continually proving to the world the fallacy of their impossibilities. This man, whose unexcelled qualities I have enumerated, into your hands, and under your surveillance, I am ready to place. Will you accept him?

MISS AM. I will.

PROF. Then take him and be happy. [Gives hand to Miss Am. ARN. Professor, all bachelors do not fear marriage, I see. . .

PROF. Marriage is the means by which nature continues animation. Through the instrumentality of matrimonial connections only can life be propagated. Now, to create anything, there must be something to create from; because nothing plus nothing equals nothing; but something plus something always equals something; which conclusively proves that there must have always been something. Now, what was that something? It must have been life, for what else can create but life; therefore, life had no beginning; that which has no beginning can have no ending; consequently life is eternal.

MISS AM. Professor, I believe we have business of more consequence than your polytechnical speeches.

PROF. Ah! so we have; I almost forgot my happiness. Well, as soon as you are ready I am.

MISS AM. Clara, we will retire and arrange our toilet.

[Exit Miss Am. and CLARA, R.

PROF. Arnold, have you seen the morning paper?

ARN. No, I haven't; anything new, Professor?

PROF. Yes (*takes paper out of pocket*), here is a long column about Clifford, and also speaking of you in very high terms.

ARN. Ah! you have slightly stirred my curiosity.

PROF. Listen, and I'll satisfy it. (*Reads.*) A desperate attempt to escape was made yesterday by Charles Clifton, *alias* Charles Clifford, who is serving a life-sentence for the murder of a very efficient police-officer two years ago; but through the watchfulness of the officers, and the efficient system now in operation at the prison, he was discovered, and his attempt frustrated; and to prevent any future attempts, he was placed in a much stronger cell, and heavily appareled in a suit of irons, which he is to wear until his future conduct shall justify their removal. The officers believe him to have been a hard, brutal desperado, and suppose he has committed more than one murder; but no amount of questioning or punishment can draw a confession from him; and since his incarceration he has not been known to speak a word, only when compelled, and then but an indistinct monosyllabic ejaculation. He is the most stupid misanthrope that has ever appeared within the walls of the prison, and it is observed that he is a creature in which every spark of humanity has become extinct.

ARN. He is a hard case.

PROF. If I did not see it, I could never believe that so hard a wretch could present so frank an exterior. Now, here's where you are mentioned. (*Reads.*) All good people should combine in thanking our very esteemed citizen, Mr. Robert Arnold, who was chiefly instrumental in bringing to justice so very dangerous a character. Oh! by the by, I forgot, I must go and procure a license. Arnold, you entertain both ladies until I arrive. [Exit F. to L.

ARN. It seems as if there was some invisible power aiding me in this. In the supernatural world, — if there be such a world, which I doubt there be, only in the minds of weak, brainless fools, — there are but two powers, — a good and an evil. The good, they say, always leads to happiness. Now, that is where I am going; therefore I am good. The evil, they say, leads to unhappiness; that is where Clifford is bound, which proves he is evil. Consequently, the supernatural as well as the natural justify me. All rational modes of reasoning proclaim me right and Clifford wrong; and as those in the wrong must suffer, then Clifford only receives his dues.

SCENE 2d. — Street. Enter MIKE, L. in a very dilapidated condition.

MIKE. Well, I'm back again after my two long years thramping over the world, and devil the haporth have I to show for it. Bad luck to that shpaldeen that sent me out of the world to shtarve! fwhen I lay me fist upon his ould caubeen, I'll turn him into smithereens; and if I don't then ye may call me davy.

Enter PROF. R., and comes in forcible contact with MIKE.

Yes, ye may call me dav — Bad luck to you! am I a foot-ball, or what am I?

PROF. What are you?

MIKE. Yes; fwhat am I?

PROF. Well, to describe you scientifically, and give you a place in my Polyological Classification, necessitates the employment of a polytechnical nomenclature; therefore, you are, zoologically, a mammalated bipedal omniverous vertebrate; chemically, an amorphical carbonaceous solidification on phosphorated calcium; botanically, you are in class Vulgaria; order, Europia; genera, Hibernia; Darwinistically, a caudless, progressive quadrupal biped; anthropologically, you are — but I must leave you unfinished, sir, as business of the most vital importance awaits me. [Exit PROF. R.

MIKE. Fwhat did he say I was? I wonder did he shpake bad of me. Fwhat a fine thing it is to be edecated, fwhen you can shpake all that fine edecated talk; and you can shpake all the bad you want to, and it 'ont be bad, for devil the one can know fwhat your shpaking to him. I musht larn some o' that fine talk, to fetch along to Ireland wid me; and won't the shechoolmaster's eyes shtick out fwhen he hears me. Fwhat a fwhile now, I'll ax this man that's comin' along fwhat I am, and then I'll larn some of his talk.

Enter Bos., R.

Say, mishter, will ye plaise tell me fwhat I am?

Bos. I should pwonounce you, sah, a whiskey-dwinking, vulgah Paddy.

MIKE. Am I, now? you little shmikeen; I'll twisht the hedeen (*shakes Bos*) off from ye!

*Enter POLICE, L.*

I'll tache—

Bos. Help! help! murder!

POLICE *seizes MIKE*. MIKE *breaks away*.

MIKE. Lay down yer shellaleh and I can bate the two of ye.

POLICE. Come, none of your shenanagen. (*Seizes MIKE, strikes him with club, and drags him off, L.*) Come along. [Exit L.]

Bos. Yah, ha, ha! Clevah! clevah!

[Exit L.]

SCENE 3.—*Prison. CHAS. discovered chained.*

CHAS. Oh, can Heaven be just?

*Enter FRED and JAILER, L.*

JAILER. There he is, sir; but you will only find him a stupid misanthrope, without a particle of humanity. [Exit JAILER, L.]

FRED. Charles! Charles!

CHAS. Fred! Oh, you are kind — very kind. I thought everybody had forgotten me; but you didn't, Fred, did you?

FRED. No, Charles, not for one moment; and every day for two years I have tried to see you, but they wouldn't let me until to-day, when the governor gave me this permission; but it is only for a few moments, and — Can I do anything for you, Charles?

CHAS. No, Fred, nothing.

FRED. Charles, you have some deep secret that is knawing your heart away. I can see it eating your very life out. Come, now, Charles, tell me what it is, and —

CHAS. No, no, Fred; that secret must not be told. Your anxiety for my happiness would make another that I worship very unhappy.

FRED. Why should you care anything about another that cares not for you. Charles, the primary consideration of everybody should be their own individual happiness. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature."

CHAS. Yes, Fred; but there is another law higher than nature. "Do to others as you would have them do unto you" is a law far above all nature.

FRED. But, Charles, I want to do something for you, — only tell me how.

CHAS. Fred, I have not seen Jenny for two years. Where is she, Fred?

FRED. I don't know, Charles. At the time of your sentence she arose from a sick bed as if by magic, and, on her knees, she vowed to Heaven that she would release you from prison or die in the attempt. Then she went away, and has not been heard of since.

CHAS. Jenny is a good girl. Fred, can you give her your love?

FRED. I already love her with my whole soul, Charles.

CHAS. Then, promise me, Fred, that you will find her, and make her your wife. Promise!

FRED. I promise.

CHAS. Then, Fred, I can spend the rest of my days in happiness here. And, Fred, years hence, when I am an old man, and you will have a happy family of smiling children around you, will you let them come and see me, Fred? And, Fred, when at night, with your happy children gathered about your knees, and their little smiling faces uplifted to yours, tell them, Fred, what happy times you and I have had together; and, when you are teaching them their prayers, ask them, Fred, to send one little prayer to heaven for me. Fred, when I was a little child —

FRED. Come, come, Charles, cheer up.

CHAS. Fred, in the whole course of my life I have never wronged anybody. I have always tried to live a virtuous life; and they say that virtue is rewarded. See my reward. (*Extends hands.*) Fred, there is no justice in heaven! 'Tis all a lie! If it was just, why should I be punished for being virtuous.

FRED. Charles, do you remember how, one hot, sultry, Sabbath day, tired, sore, and hungry, we entered a small village meeting-house?

CHAS. I do, Fred.\*

FRED. How the minister said, that when the jeweller wanted to distinguish gold from its imitations, he placed the suspected article against a touchstone, and then applied an acid. If it was real gold, it shone brighter after the test than before it, and the jeweller valued and preserved it; but if it was not gold, it lost its brightness, and was cast aside by the jeweller as a worthless counterfeit. Charles, our heavenly Father is the jeweller, virtue is the gold, this world is the touchstone, temptation is the acid, and man is the suspected article. He is placed upon this touchstone world and tested with the acid temptation; and if he is true virtue, then he will shine brighter after the test, and that great Jeweller will value and preserve him; but, if he is not virtue, then his counterfeit brightness will vanish, and that great Jeweller will cast him aside as a worthless counterfeit.

*Enter JAILER, L.*

JAILER. Sir, the time allowed for your visit has expired.

FRED. A moment longer, sir.

JAILER. My orders are peremptory.

FRED. Charles, good-by, good-by!

JAILER. Come, sir.

FRED. Charles, I am going. Good-by!

CHAS. Good-by, Fred, good-by! (*Exit FRED and JAILER, L.*) Oh! then I am not virtue; I am only a worthless counterfeit. (*Kneels.*)

*Music, tremulo, "Sweet Spirit, Hear my Prayer."*

O kind and merciful Father!

Forgive my weak moments, I pray,

And strengthen my wavering virtue,  
To keep all temptation away.

*Enter JEN., L., attired in male costume.*

JEN. Charles! Charles! don't you know me?

CHAS. Jenny! (*Embrace.*)

JEN. Charles, I have come to free you.

CHAS. Jenny, those stone walls are too thick and strong; and our united efforts against them would but exhaust us without affecting the walls.

JEN. Charles, a woman never goes to work like a foolish, headstrong man, who, relying on his brute strength, foolishly dashes his head against the wall; and, when discouraged and exhausted from his vain attempts, he then sits down in despair. No woman ever works like that, Charles; she'll work with more subtlety, and never despairs until her object is accomplished.

CHAS. But she sometimes fails, Jenny, and comes to grief; and our failure would only bring you to grief, and that would but create for me a future misery.

JEN. Your remaining here, Charles, but prolongs my unhappiness; for I can never be happy unless you are so.

CHAS. Then be happy. Jenny, you can make me very happy.

JEN. Yes — how?

CHAS. It was Fred who saved your life.

JEN. It was; and I shall always remember and respect his noble, manly heart.

CHAS. Then promise me, Jenny, to become his wife.

JEN. Ah! his wife? Who authorized you to choose a husband for me? Charles Clifford, for two long years I have unceasingly labored to effect your release, and now, when I have come to do so, you choose for me a husband. You are unkind, ungrateful.

CHAS. No, no, Jenny. If you only knew how much I thought of you, you would not say that. It is through my love for you, Jenny, that I wear these chains.

JEN. For me?

CHAS. Yes. One night, as in my cell I lay, I thought I saw your bleeding breast, as it appeared that night when on the cold, damp street you lay. Madly to the grating I sprang, and from its place a bar I wrenched, and with that bar I gained the wall; but right in my path, between me and freedom, stood an officer. I raised the bar to strike him dead; but, Jenny, I could not kill; my hand dropped powerless, and he brutally struck me down, and with curses and kicks dragged me back, and on my limbs those chains he placed. For you, Jenny, I would willingly suffer much more, for with my whole soul I love you, and if I were free I would show you how I can love.

JEN. Then, Charles, you shall be free. (*Opens bundle.*) See! those saws will cut your chains, and this disguise will pass you to freedom! And then, Charles, we will —

CHAS. Be married, Jenny. I swear we will! This, my oath, to heaven I send. And, if ever from you I'd ever wish to part, or to

another give my heart, then upon this oath, Jenny, you may call. Now the saws, the saws !

JEN. Yes, yes. Here. (*Gives saws.*)

CHAS. Now, Jenny, come sit down beside me and tell me your adventures and how you came to be a boy, while I undo this work of merciful man.

JEN. Yes. Now, let me hold this while you saw it. There !

CHAS. Now, I'm ready to hear you, Jenny.

JEN. I was lying on a sick bed when I heard of your sentence. My sickness all vanished, and I determined to free you; but, being known and watched by Robert Arnold, I was obliged to disguise myself, and as a boy, I have constantly watched both prison walls and officers. They would employ me on small errands at first; and after a while, they finding me so trustworthy, they gave me a permanent position. I saw you quite often, Charles, but was afraid to speak to you. One day as an officer passed me with the bunch of prison keys I stumbled against him, and, with a piece of clay in each hand, I pressed against the keys, and from those pieces of clay I made keys to admit me to all these cells. But I saw no way of getting you outside the walls, after releasing you from your cell, until to-day, when they arrested an Irishman for fighting; he became so very unmanageable that they were obliged to transfer him to one of those cells. His features bear so strong a resemblance to yours that, with a little change, you may easily pass for him. I'll transfer him to this cell, when you can exchange clothing; then I'll place you in his cell, and give you enough money to pay your fine for drunkenness and fighting. Then, Charles, you will be free. (*Chain drops off CHARLES.*)

CHAS. Free, and with you for my wife, and in another land ! Oh, happiness ! I clasp you once again.

JEN. Be ready to give your clothes to the Irishman when he comes.

CHAS. Not in your presence, Jenny.

JEN. No. Here, you exchange behind this mattress. (*CHARLES and JENNY stand mattress on side on bedstead, in front of trap, the height of mattress and bedstead not to be above or below CHARLES' eyebrows,*) and while you are exchanging you must get him to say all that you possibly can, in order to study his accent and tone of voice, which you must assume in case you should be compelled to answer any questions while passing the officers.

CHAS. I can speak French, Jenny, and they will think it is Irish.

JEN. No, no ! some of the officers are quite familiar with French; besides, we may have occasion to use your French by and by. Now, be all ready when I come. (*CHAS. goes behind mattress. Exit JEN., L. CHAS. goes down trap; but a head resembling CHAS.' is always seen moving behind mattress. Re-enter JEN. with MIKE, L.*)

JEN. This way, sir.

MIKE. Fwhere are ye goin' to be afther wanting to do wid me at all?

JEN. I want you to go behind that mattress and give your clothes to the person you will see there.

MIKE. Fwhat! to give away me clothes and go naked?

JEN. No, no! He will give you his in exchange for yours.

MIKE. Oh! I see now. 'Tis afther shwaping ye'd have me do?

JEN. Yes.

MIKE. But aren't his clothes any worse nor mine?

JEN. They are better.

MIKE. Then I'll shwap, — but am I to get any boot?

JEN. Yes, sir, you shall. Now go. [MIKE goes behind mattress.

MIKE. Is it me old duds you'd be afther wanting, sir?

JEN. Get ready as soon as you can, Charles. I'll go and ascertain if the way is all clear. [Exit L.

CHAS. How long have you been in this country, sir?

MIKE. More nor two years, sir. You see, sir, I came over to thry and see if I could find any news of my father and the two childer that was along wid him in a ship that was losht fwhen they wor babies. I have a letter here for the girl fwhen I'll find them.

CHAS. If the ship was lost I don't see how the babies could escape.

MIKE. Exhcape! Look at that, now, for a man of your age to afther shpaking. Don't ye know that fwhere there is a ship there must be wather, and fwhen there is wather you can shwim; and fwhen the ship was getting losht couldn't they lave the ship and go into the wather, and fwhen they wor in the wather couldn't they shwim?

CHAS. Your babies must be very old, sir, if they could swim.

MIKE. Wor they, now? The boy was walking and the girl was creeping.

CHAS. Brother and sister, were they not?

MIKE. Faith, then, they wor not; so that's fwhere you make another mistake. The girl was the daughter of the captain of my father's regiment, and the boy was the son of the lieutenant of the regiment, and me father was the corporal of the regiment.

CHAS. But how do you know they are not dead?

MIKE. That is fwhat I'm thrying to know, sir. Ye see, sir, there is a farm in Wales waiting for the girl; and I have this letter to tell her to come and take it.

CHAS. Show me your letter, — I may assist you.

MIKE. Faith, then, I 'ont; because the letter is werry valuable, and I was tould to not let it go out o' me hands.

CHAS. Then, sir, I fear you will never find your babies unless you are more liberal with the information.

MIKE. That's just fwhat I was thinking of myself. Here it is for ye. Look at it. The lasht toime we heerd from them was fwhen a crazy ould Yankee schoolmashter shtole them from the ship fwhen they wor shwimming ashore; and he gave the boy to a Mishter Revere, and nobody knows what he did with the girl.

CHAS. The name of the ship was —

MIKE. Ship "Argus."

CHAS. (Rushing from behind mattress.) Not my sister! Thank heaven!

*Enter JEN., L.*

JEN. Come, come, Charles; no time to lose. Here, put on this wig.

CHAS. No, Jenny; I no longer need a disguise. I now can send for friends that will open the prison doors, and compel them to set me free.

JEN. Oh, heavens! If you continue this way all will be lost. No friend can get you free by openly demanding it. None can clear you of the law but Robert Arnold; and he will never do so, because he'd be compelled to accuse himself. And now, Charles, our future success depends upon all the self-possession you can command; for, if we fail now, you may never have another chance.

CHAS. Yes, Jenny, you are right.

JEN. Here. (*Places wig on CHAS.*) This will perfect your disguise. Now come. [*Exit CHAS. and JEN., L.*]

MIKE. (*Dumb head disappears, and only one head is seen behind mattress.*) I say! Bring back my letter. Are ye lishtening to me? (*Puts out head.*) Fwhere are ye? Bad luck to ye ye sthole my letter! (*Mattress falls.* Enter JEN., L.) Fwhere is me letter?

JEN. You shall have your letter, sir. Here, put this on.

[*With chain.*]

MIKE. Fwhat? Afther shtaling me letter you want to chain me down like a wild basht.

JEN. Remember, that for every day you remain in this cell with this chain upon you you shall be paid five dollars a day.

MIKE. But will ye get my letter for me?

JEN. I will get your letter, sure.

MIKE. Here, then, shtick on your chain.

[*JEN. puts chain on MIKE.*]

JEN. Here, put this on.

MIKE. Fwhat's that?

JEN. Only a wig.

MIKE. A wig! What kind of a basht is that? I wonder will it ate my hand!

JEN. No, no; it will not harm you; it is only a night-cap to keep you from catching cold.

MIKE. A night-cap! Well, by the soul of ould Moll Shlattery's black cat but it's the hairiest noight-cap that ever I shtuck me eyes upon. (*Puts on wig*) Ah! begorra I can't scratch me own head at all now.

JEN. (*With false moustache.*) Here, put this on here.

MIKE. And have'nt I enough upon me and not to be shticking that little brush undher my nose.

JEN. Now, sir, you must not speak a single word to anybody; for if you do, they will take this chain off, and then you lose your five dollars a day. [*Exit JEN., L.*]

MIKE. Faith, then, I'll shtick to me five dollars a day. Five dollars every day, wet and dhry, for not shpaking no word. Begorra that's moiighty foine pay for doin' nothing. Five dollars,— that's one pound. One pound every day! Holy father! Oh,

begorra, I'm shpaking now, and I didn't know it. Well, I 'ont shpake any more. How cowld and lonesome it is; I wonder if they be any gosht or fairies here; I never seed a gosht myself; but my uncle that died used to see them, and they used to come bansheeing around him, untill they overlooked him, and he never was the same man from that day out.

*Enter JAILER and MINISTER, L.*

JAILER. There he is, sir; but I don't think you will find a soul in him.

MIKE. Fwhat are them craters afther, I wonder? I'll bet it is to make me shpake, so I'll lose my five dollars a day; but I 'ont shpake; I'll shqueeze me jaws, and I'll hould on to me mouth, and then I can't shpake.

MINISTER. Sir, through the kindness of his excellency, I am permitted to administer to your spiritual wants, and prepare your soul for an eternal bliss; but, sir, you must first confess your crimes.

MIKE. (*Aside.*) My crimes! Oh, bad luck to him, he'll make me shpake!

MINISTER. Sir, it is presumed that you have been principally interested in several extensive robberies. Confess,—relieve your soul of that burden, for as you now stand, you are in the sight of heaven a thief, and your persistent denial of the murder of an innocent man will surely bring you to an awful punishment. Relieve your oppressed soul; unbosom yourself, and cast out forever those black crimes which you now keep locked within your bosom, for as you now are, unconfessed, you stand before that All-seeing eye a thief and murderer.

MIKE. (*Grasps minister and shakes him.*) Bad luck to ye! 'tis a lie; I never shtole, or I never kilt, ye spalpeen, ye; for fwhy do ye want to frighten the life out o' me.

[*JAILER runs to Mike and knocks him down with keys.*

JAILER. Are you injured, sir?

MINISTER. Not seriously, sir. But I hope you have not killed him.

JAILER. Kill him? Ha! But, sir, you are weak; come.

MINISTER. Poor fellow! I hope his soul is saved.

JAILER. There is no soul in him to save. [*Exit L. JAIL. and MIN.*

MIKE. Oh, fwhat was it they did do to me at all! Oh, this is hard-hearted treatment that I'm suffering; and it all come from dhrink-ing one shmall drop of fishkey at first. Bad luck to the fishkey! I dhrink no more. I'll take the pledge. Yes, I'll take it right now. I'll shwear off right now fwhere I shtand. I, Michael McNoon, shwear, from this day out, that I never won't dhrink any more fishkey fwhile—while—if I only had one shmall dhrap now, I could shwear off nice and aisy. I'll thry again. I, Michael Mc-Noon, shwear that I won't tasht or smell to any more fishkey, fwhile—fwhile—I can't get it.

*Enter FRED and JAILER, L.*

FRED. Charles, I've got them to take your chains off.

[*Half embracing Mike.*

MIKE. Bad luck to you! fwhat are ye shpluttering into me face for? fwhat have I done to ye at all? Are ye all thryng to make me crazy betune ye? (*Throws off disguise and chain.*) Ye have my poor head almost broke. Bad cess to the whole o' ye! Come now for me, and I'll bate ye all.

SCENE 4.—*Room.*

*Enter JEN. and CHAS., r.* JEN. *attired in female costume.*

JEN. Here you are safe, Charles. This is my home. After my daily labor, in the guise of a boy, I would come here and assume my proper character again. The neighbors all believe that I have a husband in France. I will say he has come on a visit, and—and for your sake, Charles, I shall be compelled to introduce you as my French husband, which will give you an opportunity to exercise your French without calling it Irish. You must assume another disguise, which I have here. (*Takes paper off bundle and throws paper on stage.*) There (*gives Charles bundle*), now go and—(*Bell rings violently.*) Quick, quick, Charles, the police are at the door! Come, this way. [*Exit JEN. and CHAS., r.*

POLICE. (*Outside.*) Helloa! within there! Helloa! (*Bell rings violently.*) Helloa, house! (*Enter POLICE, l.*) No one here! (*Enter JEN., r.*) I beg pardon, madam, but has an Irishman and a boy entered here?

JEN. We employ no servants, sir.

POLICE. I mean a person who resembles an Irishman accompanied by a boy.

JEN. I am not aware of any boy having entered here; and if you wish to insinuate that my husband resembles an Irishman, you should therefore convey your information to him personally.

POLICE. Madam, I have been informed that the parties I am in search of entered this house, and I shall be compelled to search.

JEN. Then, sir, it will be necessary to consult my husband; and though you may with impunity insult his wife, yet remember, he is a gentleman who quickly resents every insult. (*Goes to r.*) Monsieur le Grand! Monsieur le Grand! a gentleman of the law desires your presence. [*Enter CHAS., r., attired in dressing-gown and whiskers.*

CHAS. Well, monsieur.

POLICE. Sir, there is a very dangerous criminal in this house.

CHAS. Ah! un criminal! Monsieur l'officer, etiquette vill not let me do to you what I feel, in the presence of madame.

POLICE. You misunderstand me, sir; an escaped prisoner has taken refuge in this house.

CHAS. Ha, ha, ha! Ver good, monsieur l'officer. I, Pierre le Grand, harbor un criminal in mon maison! Ha, ha! Ver good, indeed.

POLICE. He was seen to enter here, sir.

CHAS. Oh! mais il est invisible to me.

POLICE. Sir, I cannot waste time in words; I should like to search the house.

CHAS. Eh? Sarch le maison de Pierre le Grand?

POLICE. The law compels me, sir, and those who are foolish and headstrong enough to defy the law, always suffer.

CHAS. Oui, oui, monsieur, vous-avez raison; le maison de Pierre le Grand il est at your service, monsieur. Madame, voulez-vous le kindness to conduct monsieur l'officer.

JEN. There is the way, sir. (*Points r.* *Exit POLICE, r.*) Oh, Charles, you did splendidly! Only keep up your courage and all will be well. (*Bell rings.*)

FRED. (*Outside.*) Helloa! within there.

[JEN. looks L.]

JEN. It is Fred! Don't you recognize him while the police is in the house.

*Enter FRED.* JEN. at r. keeps her back to FRED.

FRED. Say, mister, is there a man and boy here that don't belong here? Speak! Do you hear? Are you deaf?

CHAS. Non, garçon, here, monsieur.

FRED. Oh, confound your gibberish! Have you a man here that don't belong here?

CHAS. Oui, monsieur, un officer,— le policeman, now searching for le prisoner.

FRED. Where is the policeman? I want his assistance.

CHAS. Ah, monsieur! you no mean to say you will assist le policeman?

FRED. Yes, I say it. Where is he?

CHAS. My God! monsieur, are you mad?

FRED. Where is the policeman I say? I see him! [*Exit r.*]

CHAS. Oh! Fred against me, too! Oh, this is the hardest blow of all!

JEN. Oh, monstrous! I thought him so noble! When I lay upon a sick bed he watched me as tenderly as a mother would her own child. Oh, why should so tender a heart become so base and deceitful! Charles, what is the cause of this?

CHAS. Jenny, Fred loves you, and while I am free he thinks I am in his way, and man's love for woman dissolves the strongest friendships. Jenny, Fred is not bad; he can give you a noble heart.

JEN. Do you think I would take to my bosom a base wretch who deceived his friend to satisfy his own selfish ends? No, never! His very touch would curdle the blood in my veins, and his breath would around me create an atmosphere of suffocation! Charles Clifford, you are a coward, and as false as your deceitful friend!

CHAS. No, no, Jenny! Forgive me, but this letter has changed our future life. My love must all go to another.

JEN. To another? What other?

CHAS. Clara Harold.

JEN. Clara Harold! Do you mean the girl who marries Robert Arnold to-day?

CHAS. Ah! What? Marry Arnold?

JEN. Yes. I saw it in this paper. (*Picks up newspaper off stage and gives it to CHAS.*) There it is. (*Points on paper.*)

*Enter FRED and POLICEMAN, R.*

FRED. He is not here, that's certain. (*Goes L. C.*)

POLICE. Sir, I thank you, and hope you will excuse my rudeness. The person I am in search of is not here. (*At L.C.*)

CHAS. Out of my way! The first man who tries to stop me I will kill as I would a dog! Out of my way!

[*Rushing to L., throws FRED, and Exit L.*

POLICE. It is my man,—the escaped murderer! Stop thief! Stop thief! [*Discharges pistol and Exit L.*

JEN. Oh, you have killed him!

[*Exit all, L.*

SCENE 5.—*Interior of church. MINISTER standing in pulpit at back of stage, facing audience. CLARA and ARN. standing facing MINISTER; CLARA on R. of ARN.; PROF. on L. of ARN.; MISS AM. on R. of CLARA.*

MINISTER. Here in the presence of earthly witnesses, and under the all-seeing eye of that Omnipotent Power who punishes all crime and rewards all virtue, you, Robert Arnold, solemnly promise to take this woman, Miss Clara Harold, for your lawful wife?

ARN. I do.

MINISTER. Here in the presence of earthly witnesses, and under the all-seeing eye of that Omnipotent Power who punishes all crime and rewards all virtue, you, Miss Clara Harold, solemnly promise to receive, recognize, and obey this man, Mr. Robert Arnold, as your lawful husband?

*Enter CHAS., R.*

CLARA. Ye—ye—yes.

MINISTER. (*Steps down from pulpit and stands on slight elevation in front of ARN. and CLARA.*) Then, by virtue of the divine and earthly power invested in me, I now join you together—(*as MINISTER is saying the words "You together," CHAS. leaps and throws ARN. to L.; MINISTER joins the hands of CHAS. and CLARA, and says*)—as husband and wife. What God has joined together let no man part asunder.

CHAS. Amen!

PROF. (*Catches CHAS. by collar.*) Scoundrel! (*Sees medal and grasps it.*) Ah! This medal! Charles Clifford!

[*CLARA screams and falls.*

*Enter FRED, R. MISS AM. revives CLARA.*

FRED. (*Looking to rear.*) This way, sir.

*Enter POLICE, R.*

ARN. There stands your prisoner,—Charles Clifton, the murderer!

FRED. And who are you?

ARN. His accuser, Robert Arnold.

FRED. Then, upon the authority of this warrant, I command the arrest of his accuser, Robert Arnold. [*Gives warrant to POLICE.*

ARN. What am I accused of?

FRED. The murder of a policeman, two years ago.

ARN. Who brings this charge?

FRED. I do. And my witness is a person who saw you commit the deed,— Michael McNoon.

ARN. It is false; there is no such person in the country.

FRED. I am aware that you smuggled him off; but he has returned, and is now at the prison.

CHAS. (*Runs to FRED.*) Fred!

FRED. Charles, you're free!

POLICE. Yes; this warrant calls for the arrest of Robert Arnold. I am compelled to execute it. [*Handcuffs ARN.*]

CHAS. Fred, if you only knew how much I have wronged you you would never forgive me!

PROF. Clifford, where did you get this medal?

CHAS. It was placed on my person when I was a child.

PROF. You are Clara's brother!

CHAS. The boy and girl that you saved from the wrecked ship "Argus," Professor, are not brother and sister. This letter proves it. (*Gives letter to PROF.*) Clara, I thought I was your brother; and, in my anxiety to save you from the dishonor of knowing you were your brother's wife, I know I have caused you much unhappiness. But we will be happy again, Clara, won't we?

PROF. Yes, Clara is the daughter of Captain Harold, and Charles Clifford is the son of Lieutenant Ambrey.

MISS AM. That is all very well; but how many wives does Mr. Clifford desire?

*Enter JEN., R.*

PROF. Charles, on the day of your separation you were seen in a rather familiar intercourse with a lady who was said to be your wife. Was that woman your wife?

CHAS. My wife! Me with another wife! I knew you thought me guilty of some offence; but to place me so low in your estimation as that— Here is that same lady. Jenny, are you my wife?

JEN. No.

CLARA. (*Goes on her knees.*) Oh, Charles, forgive me!

CHAS. Yes, Clara, in those arms you will find a full forgiveness. (*Embrace.*) Before we can be united again, Clara, I must obtain this lady's consent. Jenny, there stands the lady that should be my lawful wife, and to rejoin her again only requires your consent.

JEN. (*Softly.*) Sir, for years you have been the subject of my thoughts, and for two long, weary years, night and day, I have patiently labored to give you freedom; and as you lay in prison chains— Oh, how gladly would those limbs have worn those chains for you! for every clink of your chain sent a painful throb to my heart. This bullet-wound in my breast, which I have taken to save your life, pains me still, and now it pains me more than ever. (*Fiercely.*) This woman but sees you in the presence of another, and for that she cast you forth to the world. And for this hard-hearted, selfish woman you now sacrifice me.

CLARA. O-h, forgive me!

JEN. Charles Clifford, an oath you did to heaven send, that

if from me you would wish to part, or to another give your heart, upon that oath I then should call. Upon that oath I now do call!

MISS AM. Hold, young woman! Mr. Clifford is a divorced husband. The law forbids his marrying anybody during the lifetime of the lady he was divorced from; and remember that it was you who parted them; and it now lays with you to unite them again.

JEN. (*Very slowly leads CLARA to CHAS.*) It was I who parted you. (*Joins the hands of CHAS. and CLARA together.*) I now unite you again; live happy. [*Overcome, falls into CHAS. arms.*

CHAS. Jenny, for years you have kept a kiss for me; here, take it again (*kiss*), and give it to one more worthy of you than I am. If you should be my wife, Jenny, Fred would be very unhappy, and Clara would be most miserable. You and I, knowing that we were the cause of their unhappiness, could not be happy. But Heaven has ordained that we shall be happy. My oath was, Jenny, we will be married; so we will; I to Clara, and you to Fred. Fred, here is as noble a soul, and as pure a gem, as this world contains. Take her, Fred, and give her the love and devotion her pure soul deserves. (*Gives JEN. to FRED.*) Robert Arnold, I forgive you, and at your trial I will prove that the crime you are now accused of was accidental. But remember, that on this Ladder of Life there are two roads, and we have our choice of either. One of them is the road of sin; it may be wide, gilded, and tempting, but it always leads to misery. The other is the road of virtue; it may be long, narrow, and crooked, but it always leads to happiness.

[*Stands by CLARA.*

PROF. Yes, it is a polyological fact, polyologically demonstrated, that all virtue always did, and always will, result in a direct opposition to all evil, because antagonistical; and no antagonisms have ever been known to harmonize while antagonistic. If we mix evil and virtue in the same crucible, there will always be an antagonism, unless assimilation should set in; then, consequently, not antagonistic, because assimilation always harmonizes all antagonisms; but no antagonisms will ever harmonize without assimilation, which, therefore, proves my former assertion, that no antagonisms have ever been known to harmonize while antagonistic.

FRED. Charles, the Ladder of Life has no more broken places for us.

CHAS. We have passed them all, Fred —

And at last, after our three long years of strife,  
We've happiness reached on the Ladder of Life.

CURTAIN.





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